

Plain Sermons

BY

DANIEL SOMMER

PLAIN SERMONS

A VOLUME OF TWENTY DISCOURSES OFFERED
TO THE READER

BY

DANIEL SOMMER

PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

*I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because
thou hast hid these things from the wise and pru-
dent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even
so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy
sight.—Jesus. Matt. 11:25, 26.*

VOLUME I

Published by

DANIEL SOMMER

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

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P R E F A C E

WOULD you like to read a book of plain sermons? If so you will do well to read what is now offered to you. Plain truth set forth in plain sentences—this has been my purpose in preparing these sermons. Not an hour, nor even a minute, so far as I recollect, has been devoted to anything except PLAINNESS in my efforts to write these sermons.

The subjects discussed in these sermons are not the most ordinary. But they are such as I have thought would be the most beneficial to the reader in view of the efforts now made by many skeptics to produce doubt concerning the Bible. Benefit and not popularity, instruction and not entertainment—these are the ends that I have had before my mind while writing this book. I trust it will be carefully read by many thousands of inquirers for truth, and that its teachings will all be seriously considered by all its readers.

I have studied the Bible for over forty years, almost to the exclusion of every other book. And I have deferred offering a book of sermons to the public till I had completed my sixty-third year. This means that whatever the defects of these sermons may be they are not the result of haste. And I earnestly request that not one of its readers will reject any of its teachings through haste.

DANIEL SOMMER.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA,

March 20, 1913.

PLAIN SERMONS

SERMON NO. I

IS THE BIBLE AN UP-TO-DATE BOOK?

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Psalm 12: 6.

COMMON justice permits all accused persons to testify in their own behalf. Such justice will permit the Bible to testify in its behalf. The accusation is made against the Bible that it is "a back number"—"an antiquated document"—"not up-to-date." Therefore, the words of the text, selected from the writings of the inspired king of Israel, seem proper as a beginning of that which is offered in the Bible on the subject now before us. Certainly those words are broad in their bearings. If the words of the Lord are, indeed, "pure words," from which all error is separated, even as all dross is separated from silver that has been purified seven times, then those words are worthy of the entire confidence of all mankind. But the question arises, *Are the words of the Lord separated from all error—separated from all mistakes?*

Many professed scholars, and others who have confidence in them as scholars, have decided that the Bible is not in harmony with the discoveries of modern

science. On the contrary, they have said that the Bible is opposed to science, and that, as the decisions of science must be accepted, the Bible should be rejected. Many who cherish such thoughts speak of the Bible charitably, and say it is a good book — of the kind. But they add, that it was written for the childhood age of mankind, and is not worthy of the confidence of men and women, or those who live in the advanced age of this world. In other words, they say, or intimate, that it is OUT-OF-DATE. They say, likewise, that it should be regarded as history, and literature, but not as a book of divine inspiration, worthy of confidence as the best religious guide.

But those who thus think cannot afford to be unfair toward the Bible, and suppress its testimony in its own behalf. They cannot afford to refuse to read, or hear, what is set forth in its pages concerning science, or any other subject. Then let us begin with science. It is unfair to charge a lion with weakness, and yet keep him confined in a close cage. Turn him loose and see what he can do. On the same principle it is unfair to charge that the Bible is opposed to science, and yet refuse to permit it to testify to our minds in regard to science. Then let it testify, and, first of all, concerning the blood of the animal flesh, including the animal part of man.

For a period of two thousand years, or more, physicians were ignorant of the relation of the blood to the life of man. As a result they bled sick persons for many, if not a majority, of their ailments. As a consequence they became *depleters*, and, in many instances, MURDERERS of sick persons. The conscientious physician now feels like shuddering when he thinks of the unnecessary bleeding that was done in former genera-

tions. The proud physician hangs his head in shame when the subject is mentioned, and tries to call attention to another theme. Yet bloodletting, or "phlebotomy," as it is technically called, was formerly regarded as SCIENCE, and had been so regarded from the days of Hippocrates, the so-called "father of medicine," and even beyond his generation. As a result, under the cover of so-called SCIENCE millions were depleted, or weakened, in their life, and thousands were murdered. That George Washington's life was shortened by the undue use of the lancet is not questioned by any physician who is acquainted with the events connected with his last hours. While Napoleon Bonaparte was on the Island St. Helena he inquired of a German physician, who visited him, what system of medicine prevailed in Germany. Then he added, "On this Island it is calomel and bleeding forever."

But, about the middle of the Nineteenth Century, the discovery was made that the blood *is the life of the flesh of the entire animal kingdom*. Then the conclusion was reached that bloodletting to cure diseases was a mistake, for the life of the flesh should not be taken out of it in order to keep the life in it. Men of medicine were horrified to think of that which they had been doing with the lancet. As a result they denounced the bloodletting practice, and decided to leave the blood in the veins of the patient, and try to purify it there. Most of them went to the other extreme, and would let a patient die rather than to bleed in order to relieve a congestion.

But in the meantime, what was the testimony of the Bible on this subject? In Genesis 9: 4 we read this: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Then in Leviticus 17: 11, 14

we read: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood. . . For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof." Then in Deuteronomy 12: 23 we read: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." Thus we find that the Bible began to testify that the blood is the life of the flesh over four thousand years before men of science made the discovery! *Is the Bible an up-to-date book?* The truth is that it antedated the most important discovery of modern science for a period of *four thousand years, and more*. God declared to Noah that the blood is the life of the flesh over twenty-three hundred years before the beginning of the Gospel Age.

But why did not men of science learn what the Bible had declared on this subject? For the same reason that they do not now learn what the Bible declares on other subjects. They are prejudiced against it, and, as a result, will not study it. With scarcely an exception they have remained densely ignorant of the Bible, and, in many instances, have been persistent slanderers of it. They have kept the lion closely caged, and have charged him with weakness. The time has come to let the lion out that he may show his strength.

Closely connected with the so-called science, which adopted the bloodletting system, was the water-restricting system. The Bible declares that God has provided water for the thirsty, and without restriction. Solomon said, "If thine enemy be thirsty, give him water to drink," and adds, "As cold water to a thirsty soul so is good news from a far country." (Proverbs 25: 21, 25.) All the testimony of the Bible on this subject is to the same effect, and not the slightest hint is given that water should be kept from any one

who was, or ever would be, thirsty, at any time, or in any circumstances. But so-called science, for many years, taught that a fevered patient should *not have cold water*. But at a later date real science discovered that cold water, ice water, and even ice, are all good for fevered patients, and, as a rule, without stint or restriction. Thus, on this question, likewise, the Bible antedated so-called science. *Is the Bible an up-to-date book?*

Attention is next invited to the scientific discovery that the earth moves, and even revolves in space, which discovery was made by Galileo, in the early part of the Seventeenth Century. For five thousand years, or more, pretenders in regard to science thought, as far as we are informed of them, that the earth was stationed in space, and was motionless, while the sun, and moon, and many stars, revolved around it. Such were the best conclusions of scientific men, as far as their history has been written by uninspired man. But in the first part of the Seventeenth Century Galileo decided that the earth moves. An ignorant priesthood persecuted him for making his decision known, and that fact, by men of so called science, has been charged against the Bible. They have said that the church and the Bible are both opposed to science, or to certain discoveries of science, not knowing that a fallen church did not know what the Bible set forth on the subject. The priesthood of the apostate church neither studied the Bible aright, nor suffered others to have it in their possession when they could prevent them. The Bible was like a lion that was closely caged, and then slandered. The time has come to let the lion show himself.

Now let us read the divine testimony on the question before us — the question of the earth's motion.

In Job 38: 12, 13, 14 we find the following: "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that he might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment." Here we are informed that the earth is "turned," and even that "it is turned as clay to the seal." This intimates a complete turning. In later translations the meaning of this scripture is obscured by using the word "changed" for "turned." But this is not according to the original text, nor common sense. The idea of changing clay to the seal is nonsense, except when the word "change" is used in the sense of turn, or change in position. The Common Version of the Sacred Text on this question is right, and can be defended against all just criticism. The teaching of the Almighty in the address to Job, which is here recorded, is that the earth moves, for "it is turned," and even is "turned as clay to the seal." The word "seal" means "little mark," and the seal "was much used by the ancients to authenticate documents, and secure packages and doors," we are informed. The impressions were made in clay or wax. Seals were frequently engraved stones set in rings. Therefore the turning of clay to receive a stamp, or impression, of some kind, was used to illustrate the turning of the earth. While the potter had his vessel of clay on his wheel, having formed it by turning it around, he gave it the finishing touch by turning it to the seal to make the imprint that he wished to make on it. This is a fitting illustration of the turning of the earth to the sun to receive its light and heat. But this was declared to Job, who lived in the Patriarchal Age, and thus, at least, fifteen hundred years before the

Gospel Age was introduced. This being true we learn that the Bible indicated the motion of the earth about three thousand years before it was discovered by men of science. What shall we say to this? *Is the Bible an up-to-date book?* The facts show that it is AN ANTE-DATE BOOK. It ANTEDATED the discovery of the blood as the life of the flesh by over four thousand years, and it ANTEDATED the discovery of the motions of the earth by, at least, three thousand years. Now, what becomes of the charge that it is out-of-date, is a "back-number," or is an "antiquated document?" *It is like all other reflections against the Bible.* IT IS FALSE.

But this is not all. When was the discovery made that the material world in which we live is a sphere and not a plane—is round and not flat? We are informed that a conclusion was reached on this subject in the latter part of the Fifteenth Century. Previous to that time the general supposition was that the general surface of the earth was horizontal and not spherical—flat and not round. Science could not correct the error, and scientific men were not humble enough to read the Bible on the subject, or they might have learned that the earth, with its waters, is a sphere, or, at least, is spherical. In Isaiah 40:22 we read of God: "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." Here is a clear index to the shape of the earth, and by this index scientific men might have concluded, long before they did, that the world in which they lived is round in its general shape. But they did not read the Bible, or did not read it all, and, as a result, they remained in ignorance on this subject till a partial demonstration of its spherical

shape was made in the latter part of the Fifteenth Century.

But the question is, What shall we say of the Bible? Its testimony on this subject had been in existence over two thousand years when the discovery was made that this material world is round! Is it an up-to-date book? The evidence shows that it is not only *up-to-date*, but *ahead-of-date* on this subject as well as others.

But some one may now be ready to inquire, "Does not the Bible teach that the sun and moon stood still in the days of Joshua?" Yes, in Joshua 10: 12, 13 we read that "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed till the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." But this must be considered in the light of Romans 6: 19. In that scripture Paul declared, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh." That is to say, inspired men wrote in ACCOMMODATIVE LANGUAGE. They endeavored to bring the great things of the Creator down to the humble capacity of the creature. Therefore much accommodative language was used, even as scientific men, and all other teachers, now use. For instance, a man of science makes an almanac in which he teaches that the earth revolves, yet he sets forth the time when the sun will RISE each morning and when it will GO DOWN each evening. He informs his readers that the "sun rises" and the "sun sets." But that is accommodative language, intended to conform speech to appearances. If scientists feel at liberty to use such language, why do they not admit the right of inspired writers to use it, especially when one of those writers gives a good reason for so doing? Paul says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh." (Romans 6: 19.) In another place he says, "I have fed

you with milk, and not with meat : for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." (1st Corinthians 3 : 2.)

But some one else may say, that the Bible teaches that the earth is square, for it makes mention of the "four corners of the earth." Yes, in Revelation 7 : 1 we do read of "the four corners of the earth," and "the four winds of the earth." But both of these expressions are accommodative, even as the expressions, "the four quarters of the globe," and "the north and south poles," and "the equator" are all accommodative. Those who endeavor to impeach, or set aside, the testimony of the Bible on the basis of such criticisms show that they are anxious to criticise. But the anxious critic is always over-critical, and impeaches himself rather than the person, or the document, that he criticises. In such an instance the smoke of the priest, rather than of the intended victim, ascends. Thus it has been, thus it is, and thus it will be, with all who endeavor to overthrow the Bible by attempting to prove that its testimony is not reliable. Though it was not intended for a scientific document, yet, on every point that it touches the questions that are considered by science, it is not only *up-to-date*, but *ahead-of-date*.

As another illustration let us consider the Bible in regard to civil government. And first of all, let us compare it with the document commonly called, "The Constitution of the United States of America." In the fourth article and third clause of the second section of that document we find the anti-refuge slavery law, which was discussed, and enlarged upon, for about eighty years, but was finally blotted out by a terrible war. I quote the text of that law : "No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof

escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

Perhaps every American citizen, who has given an hour's thought to the subject, has concluded that the law just quoted was more effective in bringing on the war between the North and the South than all other causes combined. It was enlarged upon until it resulted in dividing the people of the United States into slave-owners, on the one hand, and slave-catchers, on the other. But many who were intended to be slave-catchers were so opposed to such business that they disregarded it, and thus became highly disloyal to their government. As a result, agitation, strife, contention, confusion, and, finally, a terrible war was introduced. That war cost the country a million, or more, of able-bodied men, with billions of treasure, and unutterable anxiety, sorrow, grief, and agony. But all this might have been avoided if that which the Bible offers in Deuteronomy 23: 15, 16 had only been observed. In that scripture the God of heaven and earth said to Israel as a nation, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him."

But the framers of the Constitution of the United States were too much engaged in other affairs to read the Bible, or they thought it was beneath their dignity to appeal to it in regard to political affairs. Be this as it may, their failure to learn what the Bible offered to them, on this subject, caused them to make a mistake which kept the United States in agitation for about

eighty years, and then brought on a war which raged with terrible fury for about four years, and from which the country has not yet fully recovered. The people of America would not hearken to the voice of God on this question, and they had to feel the terrible results of their mistake. But the question we are considering is this: *Is the Bible an up to-date book?* We have thus far found it to be AHEAD-OF-DATE in physical science, and in civil government.

Just now we should consider Deuteronomy 17:14-20. God said to ancient Israel as a nation, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me: Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee who is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law, in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left; to

the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

In view of all that has just been brought before us, several statements may be made which cannot be successfully denied.

1. All the national woes that befell the Jews as a people, in ancient times, and all the woes which have befallen them, in modern times, may be justly charged to the failure of the chief rulers of that people to observe that which we have just had brought before our minds from the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy.

2. All the national woes that have befallen all other nations may be justly charged to the failure on the part of their chief rulers to do that which was enjoined by Jehovah in regard to the Jewish king.

3. A man is not fit to be a chief ruler, nor any other kind of a ruler, who is not a frequent, and reverent, and intelligent, reader of the Bible chapter after chapter.

But the divine testimony in favor of the Bible, as an up-to-date book, is not yet exhausted. The sanitary regulations, set forth in the Jewish law, excel those that are set forth in all other documents on that subject. This is not a statement to be doubted in any measure or degree. Facts prove it beyond question. The Jews are, beyond comparison, the healthiest people in the world. Their laws in regard to health are not perfectly carried out by them in their scattered condition. For the sake of traffic they have gone into every country, and live in nearly every climate where mankind exist. Yet in every climate they are, generally, if not always, the healthiest people. Though not large nor strong in appearance, yet they live longer, and have better health, than any other people. Statis-

tics show this. The most remarkable difference between them and all other people is found in the large percentage of their infants that live. Nor is this all. The army regulations of the United States now require the same precaution in regard to covering filth, in and about certain camps, that Moses set forth in Deuteronomy 23:13. Moreover, reference is made in those regulations to the words of Moses on this subject. In view of all this we may again inquire with confidence, *Is the Bible an up-to-date book?* In answer we may say with confidence, IT IS A BOOK AHEAD-OF-DATE.

But some one may be disposed to say, that modern speed in traveling is certainly in advance of anything that is mentioned in the Bible. In response we may turn to Lamentations 4:19, and read, "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness." Our fastest trains do not run with the speed witnessed in the swoop of an eagle. Yet Jeremiah speaks of persecutors of the Jews that were "swifter than the eagles."

But, with triumphant air, some one may say, "Our speed in communicating thought excels all that is mentioned in the Bible—you are not able to find anything that excels electricity in speed." In response we may state that the best we can do, by the aid of electricity, is to get answers at once to that which we say over the wires, but in Isaiah 65:24 we read that God says of a time yet future, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear." *Is the Bible an up-to-date book?* Here we read of a date—a period—an age, when the communication of thought will not need the transmission of sound, nor of signs. But in that age mind will

read mind even at a distance. God has done that in all ages, and the Lord Jesus Christ did that while he was on earth. He even conferred the gift which enabled his apostles, and certain others, to be mind readers, or discerners of spirits. All this shows that the Bible is in advance of all dates in that which is set forth in its teachings on this subject, even without the words of Isaiah. But Isaiah plainly informs us that God plainly declares, "Before they call I will answer," and this is in advance of both the telegraph and the telephone. Whether God will bestow such power on all his people, in some future age, we are not informed, yet in the fifth chapter of Acts we learn that before a certain man named Ananias had said a word to the Apostle Peter that apostle knew that he had lied to God in regard to his possessions. Yes, and in the 14th chapter of the first book of Kings we find another witness to the same effect. God so instructed the blind prophet, Ahijah, that he told king Jereboam's wife who she was, and that she pretended to be another woman, as soon as he heard the sound of her feet.

But we need not multiply witnesses on that subject. We have thus far learned that the Bible is *in advance of all dates on all questions with reference to which we have thus far consulted it.* But let us consult it further.

Some may suppose that in regard to farming implements the Bible is a back number. With reference to this we should read Isaiah 41: 15, "Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." In this scripture God declared that the Jews should overthrow their enemies, and, in delivering his prophecy on that

subject, he made mention of something like the modern threshing machine. Notice the statement: "I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth," or having "mouths," as the original text literally means. But as the mouth and teeth belong together the sense is not changed, nor the force of the prophecy weakened by an exact translation. Besides, if men had read the Bible with care they would have found an index here which might have led them to invent the modern thresher two thousand years, or more, before it was thought of by them. In view of this we may again inquire, "*Is the Bible an up-to-date book?*" and to this inquiry we may again answer, IT IS IN ADVANCE OF ALL DATES.

But some persons are very reluctant to admit that they have been wrong. This is specially true of those who have declared that the Bible is a "back number," or an "antiquated document." They wish something on which to hinge a plea for their declaration, or a pivot for their leverage against the Bible. Some of that class will venture to say that modern systems of medicine in general, and surgery in particular, are in advance of anything mentioned in the Bible. In response to this we state that we have already contrasted the Bible with certain modern ideas of treating the sick, and the Bible has gained much by the contrast. But we are not averse to a further contrast. Therefore we state that modern medicine and surgery find three-fourths, if not nine-tenths, of their victims as a result of drunkenness, gluttony, and licentiousness, with other violations of nature's laws. But the Bible teaches how to avoid all these, and thereby avoid the need of modern medicine and surgery. This is certainly better than to discover remedies for diseases.

Besides, the Bible gives us a picture of health which excels all others ever offered to mankind. When the Israelites left Egypt they were a people that numbered, at least, three millions, and, perhaps four millions, or more, for they had of their number over six hundred thousand men able to bear arms. Yet we read, in Psalm 105: 37, that, "There was not one feeble person among all their tribes." Think of it, and be astonished — three or four millions of persons, yet *not one that had the rheumatism, nor dyspepsia!* Except their infants, they were all able to march. What a mass of clean and pure flesh and blood! "Not one feeble person among all their tribes!" Perhaps some one is ready to inquire what they ate. We should first ask of what they did not eat. First of all we may be sure they did not live on the white bread made by the roller-mill of modern invention. Nor did they, as slaves in Egypt, drink the distilled drinks of modern invention, not to speak of eating the mince pie and bologna sausage — all of modern invention. Nor did they use tobacco, nor opium, nor tea, nor coffee — all of modern adoption. But what did they eat? In Numbers 11: 5 we learn that they ate fish and vegetables. That God's care was over them, in a special manner, we do not question, yet the best decisions concerning foods are that fish and vegetables make the most wholesome diet, when we pass from pure milk which is the only perfect food. Thus the incidental mention of foods, which we find in the Bible, sets forth that which the best of modern science, in regard to living, must approve. Therefore, in this respect, also, the Bible is in advance of all dates of scientific discoveries. Besides, a fig poultice has been found to be the best for boils, and other swollen conditions, and pure wine the best for the stomach's

sake in certain conditions. In Isaiah 38: 21 we read of the fig poultice as an external remedy, and in 1st Timothy 5: 23 of the wine as an internal remedy for the stomach.

And what more shall we say? If we wish to think of a young man's love for a woman before marriage we need only to read the mention that is made of Jacob's love for Rachel. In Genesis 29: 20 we read, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." If we wish to read of the intenseness of love between a man and his wife we should read "The Song of Solomon," in which an account is given of interviews between Solomon and his black wife. Both of these records of love excel the stories of modern times, and here, also, the Bible is up-to-date, and in advance-of-date.

If we wish to read a fox story that excels all others, then let us read the first part of the fifteenth chapter of the First Book of Samuel. Samson caught three hundred foxes, and let them loose in the grain fields of his enemies with a firebrand tied to the tails of every two of them. Then if we wish to read of a battle that excelled all others in slaughter let us read 2nd Chronicles 13: 13-17, where we find an account of the slaughter of "five hundred thousand chosen men," of one army in a single battle, that seems to have lasted but a single day.

Many suppose that the inventions of modern times in implements of war are to be commended, but this is a mistake. The tendency of them is to prolong war, and thus make its terrors more terrible than they were when men came together in close conflict with spears, and soon decided the questions between them. A single campaign, and, very often, a single battle, ended a

war in ancient times. As a result its terrors were soon over, as far as camp life and battles, and suspense were concerned.

Do we wish to read of the strongest man? Then let us read of Samson. Do we wish to read of the most patient man? Then let us read the book of Job. Do we wish to read of the most married man? Then let us take up the history of Solomon. Moreover, we may in triumph ask, Whoever wrote law like Moses? Or, wrote Psalms like David? Or, wrote prophecies like Isaiah? Or, wrote lamentations like Jeremiah? Or, wrote visions like Daniel, and the Apostle John? In all these respects the Bible excels all other books, and, therefore, is *in advance of all dates*.

And what may we say of the literature of the Bible? In this likewise it excels all other documents. In regard to dignity of themes, and sublimity of style, it is excellent above all other volumes. The same is true in regard to conciseness and directness, pathos and imagery. In its history and its law, its poetry and its prophecy, its logic and its rhetoric, it is pre-eminent.

Take, for instance, the speech that Judah made in Egypt before Joseph, when he was pleading for his brother Benjamin, and in behalf of his father. In Genesis 44: 18-34 is the record of that speech. It was made after Joseph said that Benjamin should remain with him as a bondman, and his brothers should go home. Here is an account of that speech:

"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

"My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We

have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

"And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him no more. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest

peradventure, I shall see the evil that shall come to my father."

In regard to directness, simplicity, pathos, unselfishness, humility, and dignity, where can the equal of this speech of Judah be found in the entire domain of human literature?

As another instance take the speech which a certain young widow, named Ruth, made while clinging to her widowed mother-in-law, as it is recorded in the Book of Ruth, first chapter, 16th and 17th verses. She said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

Do you ask for abstract statements in their most dignified form? If so, read the Ten Commandments as set forth in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Do you ask for dignity and imagery combined? Then take the thirty-second and thirty-third chapters of Deuteronomy. Do you desire questions that will cause conceit to vanish and infidelity to blush? Then take the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st chapters of the Book of Job. As a sample of those questions take the following which God propounded to Job when he answered him out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or, who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or,

who laid the corner-stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" These questions are continued, and remarks are added, through four chapters. Where can their equal be found?

Do we desire to read wise sayings in simple words and sentences — sayings which set forth the most valuable instruction concerning all the important affairs of life? Then let us read the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Do we desire to read prophecies that are set forth in dignity and grandeur with rich imagery on every page? Then let us take the writings of Isaiah. Notice how he began his writings: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Abaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward." But this is only a sample of Isaiah's style, which, when considered in the light of the Jewish law and Jewish history, appears in grandeur, and eloquence, unequalled in the domain of human literature.

• Finally, let us consider the Savior's Sermon on the Mount—that greatest speech. When that speech is considered in its bearings on the Jewish law, its bearings on Christ's personal ministry, and then in its bearings on the fulness of the Gospel Age, it may be

justly declared to be the greatest speech ever delivered on earth. Let us consider the beginning of that sermon, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Matthew's record of the Gospel: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Here we may pause feeling assured that, in both doctrine and style, the Bible is up-to-date, and in advance-of-date, on all questions that it sets forth, and even on those that it incidentally mentions. "THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS; AS SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES."

SERMON NO. II

IS THE BIBLE A PLAIN BOOK?

The words of the Lord are pure words : as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Psalm 12: 6.

When silver has been "purified seven times" it is certainly free from all dross. The word of the Lord is like unto such silver. Its author has been careful to purify it from all error, and give it to mankind in perfect form. In Psalm 19: 8 David declared, "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Then, in Psalm 119: 140 he said to the Lord, "Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it." To this we should add the testimony of Solomon, in Proverbs 30: 5, "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

This testimony will force conviction in all who study it aright. In proportion as men are wise and good they try to measure their words, and to separate them from all error. "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer," is a saying of Solomon. See Proverbs 15: 28. That saying is still true. Judges of courts, for instance, study to set forth their decisions in the perfection of the language they speak. All other officials do the same, if they are worthy of the positions they hold. On this principle the Lord has given his word. He has framed it in view of the entire age for which it was intended. Therefore, "the words of the Lord are pure

words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

As the words of the Lord are "pure words," and are "very pure," they are certainly *plain words*, and even *very plain*. The Bible is the plainest book ever written on the subject of religion. We may reasonably suppose that it should be very plain because it came from the Author of man's being, and was intended for mankind. The Author of the Bible knew what was in man, and desired his welfare. Therefore he would not offer to him a book for his guidance which he could not understand. The wisdom and goodness of God are evident by that which is seen of him in the domain of nature. The perfection that is found in all that belongs to nature is sufficient to prove its Author to be infinitely wise and infinitely good. In view of this we may feel sure that he did not give to man an imperfect book, either in doctrine or form, order or style. Besides, the One who is infinitely wise and good certainly would not stamp perfection on that which is perishable, and stamp imperfection on that which is intended to live forever. Neither would he be kind in that which belongs simply to time, but unkind in that which belongs to eternity. He would not make nature so plain that man could learn enough of it to serve his purpose well in this world, but would make his book so obscure that man could not learn enough of it to serve his best interests for the world to come. Therefore, we may again conclude, *The Bible is a plain book*.

With these remarks impressed on our minds we are prepared to consider the plainness of the Bible. We may thereby assure ourselves that it is, indeed, the plainest book that was ever written on the subject of religion. Mankind, generally, regard it as a difficult

book to understand. Many think it cannot be understood by any one on earth. As a result they will not try to read it for themselves, and do not seem willing to listen while others read it. But all such make a mistake. The Lord knew what kind of a book mankind would need and he has given it to them.

But in order to understand the Bible we must begin at the right place and proceed after the right manner. The same is true of all other books. The first part of every science must be studied well by students before they are prepared for the second part. Then the second part must be studied well by them before they are prepared for the third part. This is specially true of grammar and arithmetic, logic and higher mathematics. Each advance in those parts of science depends on preceding progress—each step, after the first, depends on the preceding step. The same is true in studying the Bible.

We plead that the Bible is a plain book, but not that it may be understood without study. We may plead that nature is generous, but not that she will bestow her fruits without labor on the part of mankind. Even in the warmest of countries many of the fruits of the earth need care. The best method of caring for them, and of handling them when mature, must be studied. On the same principle the Bible yields its meaning. Those who will not study the workings of nature, and will not labor and economize, will not reap the best of earth's benefits. The same is true in regard to the Bible. Those who are not willing to study it with care cannot gather its meaning. They will blunder in regard to its teachings while they live, and will receive due reward for their unwillingness to study when they will appear in the final judgment.

The plainness of the Bible is indicated by the story of a negro preacher who was a slave. His young master intended to puzzle him by asking him to explain the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans. The negro told his young master that he could do something better than to explain those chapters to him. He said he would put him on a plan by which he could explain them to himself. Then he said, the only trouble was that his young master had come to those chapters "too quick." Having said this he advised him to go back to the first book in the Bible, and to read that until he would understand it, then take the second and do the same, and so on with every other book of the "old part of the Bible." Then he said, the first book of the "new part of the Bible" should be treated the same way. Finally, the negro said that when his young master would come to the book of Romans he should be sure to read the first chapter till he would understand it, then the second, and third, and so on till he would come to the eighth and ninth chapters. Then, he said, "Young massa, you will den understan' dese two chapters too."

Who can doubt the correctness of that negro's idea? He certainly had the right idea. He advised his young master to begin at the right place, and proceed after the right manner. If all Bible readers will thus begin, and thus continue, they will certainly make a success in reading the Bible if it be a well ordered document. And all who will test it for themselves, by reading it according to the mentioned negro's advice to his young master, will certainly learn that the Bible is well ordered. They will learn also that the easiest part of it comes first, the more difficult part comes next, and the most difficult they will find in the last of

the book. This is true of both the Old Testament and the New.

In testing this question we should first examine the Old Testament. It begins with history, continues with law, and ends with prophecy. The first book of the Bible is history with very little law in it. The second book is history and law. The same is true of the third, fourth, and fifth. In the next book, and those that are placed after it to the end of the historic books, we find history, with an outworking of law. Thus we find in the Old Testament seventeen historic books. In connection with all that are placed after the first, we find an account of the giving and outworking of the Jewish law. All who doubt this are urged to read the books titled Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings, 1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. These seventeen books are historical. In connection with them is found the giving and the outworking of such laws as God gave to his ancient people. In Genesis we find the history and the law concerning those who lived in the first religious age. In the other books, just named, we find the history of the second religious age of the world, including a record of the Jewish law and its outworkings among the Jews. In Genesis we find a history of the beginning of the world, and of the ancient nations. In the other books just named we find mention of some of God's dealings with some of those nations, but especially his dealings with the Israelites, commonly called Jews.

After we come to the close of the historic books of the Old Testament we find five books, commonly spoken of as "poetic books." In them, or most of them, we

find some history, some law, and some prophecy. The Book of Job sets forth a part of the history of a man who lived in the first religious age, or the period of family religion. We may learn this from the manner in which he worshipped. In the last part of that book God's attributes are indicated in God's own way, as far as they could be indicated in human speech. In The Book of Psalms we find a volume of Hebrew poetry in which prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and adoration are the most constant themes. The book of Proverbs is made up of wise sayings concerning the wise man and the fool, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, with expressions concerning God's greatness and goodness. The same is true, in a measure, of the book of Ecclesiastes, which means the Book of the Preacher. The book called "The Song of Solomon" is a love song, which Solomon wrote concerning love between himself and a black woman, who was, probably, his Egyptian wife.

When we have read all the historic books, and have studied the poetic books, of the Old Testament, then we are prepared for the prophetic books that follow. Seventeen of them are found in the last part of the Old Testament. In them we find a brief historic record of God's dealings with the Jews, and with certain other nations. To this is added prophecies concerning the Jews and certain other nations, also concerning the Gospel Age, the end of the world, the salvation of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked.

In view of all this, who will say that the Bible is not a plain book? The easiest part of it comes first, then the more difficult part, and then the most difficult part. The history is the department of object lessons, and even little children can learn by object lessons.

When the department of object lessons has been well studied we may study law, even divine law, as given and applied, among the Jews. When all this has been well studied, then we are prepared to study the prophecies. But this order of study must not be reversed, nor in any respect varied from. If we try to study the Old Testament prophecies before we have studied well the history and law that precede them, we shall blunder in near or about every chapter. If we try to understand the Jewish law, without studying with care the history that precedes it, we shall make many mistakes. But if we take the books of the divine record in their order, as a certain negro preacher advised his young master to do, then the divine volume will unfold to us its wonderful meaning.

All that has just been said in regard to order of procedure in studying the Old Testament is true of the New. Its historic books come first, then its books of law, and last its book of prophecy. In its historic books we find four records of the earth-life of Jesus Christ. These were chiefly intended to show that he is the Son of God. See John 20: 30, 31. Yet we find much law connected with them, or incorporated in them. Some of that law referred backward to the Jewish law which was still in force at that time. Other items of the law then given referred specially to the period of Christ's personal ministry which was intended soon to be ended. See Matthew 10: 9, 10; Luke 22: 35-37. The book of Acts was intended to set forth the history of the apostles of Christ in their preaching of the Gospel among both Jews and Gentiles. This book shows how alien sinners became Christians, and how churches of Christ were established.

The historic books just mentioned are plainer, and

easier to be understood than any other books in the New Testament. By studying them aright we are prepared to understand the books of law in the New Testament. These are commonly called the Epistles, or Letters, and are twenty-one in number. In them we find the laws which pertain to the life of the Christian, in doctrine and practice, worship and work. Some mention of history and prophecy is found in them, but they are chiefly books of law—the law of life for the Christian. When they have been well studied by us, then we have made the right preparation to study the last book in the Bible, which is chiefly prophetic. If we approach that book with a general view of all the preceding parts of the Bible before us we shall find its meaning unfolding to our minds.

With the outlines of the Bible before us, as they have just been mentioned, we can easily understand that the Bible is a well-ordered document. Its order of history, law, and prophecy, is clear, well marked, and easily understood. That order has been divinely arranged, and is in harmony with the human understanding. It is an order which, if followed by all students of the Bible, will enable them to study it without confusion. In proportion as they study it so as to understand it they will know the meaning of David's words when he wrote, "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." They will thereby know that God's words are "very pure," and thus are separated from all error.

By taking a survey of the outlines of the Bible we see they are plain. Now let us consider some special teaching of the Bible, and see if it is not plain. The ten commands, recorded in Exodus 20th chapter writ-

ten on tables of stone, were the foundation of all else that was in the Jewish law. Four of those commands had a Godward bearing and six of them had a manward bearing. The first, second, third and fourth of them were all summed up under the general command, to love God with all the heart. That general command is recorded in Deuteronomy 6: 5. Then, the remaining six commands, of the ten, recorded in the mentioned chapter, were all summed up under the general command, to love one's neighbor as himself. See Matthew 22: 36-40. The Savior declared, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." That is to say, every command of the Jewish law can be placed under one or the other of those two great commands. All commands with a Godward bearing could be placed under the command to love God with all the heart. Then, all commands having a manward bearing could be placed under the command for a man to love his neighbor as himself. In view of this we can easily see that the Bible is a plain book. It is simple, and easy to be understood by those who will study it aright. It is a plain book, and a book of pure words, free from all error.

But some man may inquire, Who is my neighbor? A certain lawyer, because he was "willing to justify himself," made that inquiry of the Savior. And Jesus answering, said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan,

as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go thou and do likewise."

This record of the Savior's explanation of the word "neighbor" does not leave any room for doubt on the subject. It shows that a man's neighbor is the one who helps him when he is in need, and especially the one who has compassion on him when he is in distress. The one who lives nearest to us may be our worst enemy, and our best neighbor may live a hundred miles, or more, from us. In view of this, the command, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is not a difficult command to obey if we have the least gratitude in our hearts. And here, again, we can understand that "the words of the Lord are pure words," and the Bible is a plain book.

Now we are prepared to consider Solomon's celebrated saying, as recorded near the end of the book of Ecclesiastes,—*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."* As we begin to consider this saying some of us may be disposed to inquire how we may *know* that we fear God aright. The answer to this question is that we may *know* that we fear God when he says that we fear him. Whenever

he says that we fear him, then we may be fully assured that our fear of him is all right. Now the question arises, When does God *say* that we fear him? The answer to this inquiry is found in Genesis 22: 1-12. Let us read the record.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the

Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

In the light of this record, just brought before our minds, all doubt is banished in regard to the evidence of fearing God. We here learn that God says we fear him when we obey him. He knew all that was in Abraham's mind and heart, but he did not acknowledge it till Abraham showed it by obedience, as far as God's mercy would permit him to obey. The same is now true. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be. God did not, and does not, and will not, acknowledge that we fear him if we *do not obey him*. But when we obey him then he says that we *fear him*. Therefore we may again affirm that the Bible is a plain book. Even Christians are required to fear God. See 1st Peter 2: 17. And in Genesis 22nd chapter we learn, beyond question, that the Lord acknowledges that man fears him when he shows it in obedience, as far as the Lord will permit him to go. This makes the subject plain to all who will consider it aright, and is further evidence that the Bible is a plain book.

But here some one may be ready to inquire, Why is it that so many differences have arisen in regard to the Bible if it is, indeed, a plain Book? We may not be able to account for all these differences. And, even if we could, we might, in so doing, need to cast very serious reflection on those with whom they have arisen. The seaman's safety is not in being able to account for the rocks, the shoals, and the quicksands on which vessels are wrecked. But his safety is in keeping

clear of them, and in steering his vessel where they are not found. The same is true of us in regard to religion. We may not be able to account for the religious differences which exist, and our safety is in keeping clear of all differences from the plainness of the Bible.

Take, for instance, the doctrine of individual election of some to everlasting life, regardless of obedience to the Gospel, and the condemnation of others regardless of disobedience. Those who advocate that doctrine refer to Romans 9: 21, which inquires, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel to honor, and another unto dishonor?" They refer also to other verses in that chapter, and to other chapters, which they profess to think prove their doctrine. But let us turn to Jeremiah 18: 1-10, and there read the divine record.

"The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do

evil in my sight that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherein I said that I would benefit them."

Here we learn that when God made mention of the potter's power over the clay to illustrate his power over mankind he referred to *nations* and not to *individuals*. We learn also that he did not condemn a nation till he had *tried it*. The potter that Jeremiah saw did not condemn the clay that he used till after he had tried it. That clay was not condemned before it was dug out of the bank from which it was taken. But it was tried for one vessel before it was made into another vessel. On this principle God dealt with nations, we are here informed. Moreover, God admits that nations differ from clay in that they can repent of evil, and turn from good. He then declares that he will himself turn from a good or evil purpose concerning a nation according to its turning from good or evil. God even declares that after he has pronounced a sentence of evil, or good, upon a nation he would turn from that sentence according to that nation's conduct. This was illustrated in the case of Nineveh, as recorded in the book of Jonah. God commanded Jonah to preach, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But when the people of Nineveh repented God changed his sentence and spared it. In view of all this we can understand that the Bible explains itself, and is a plain book on this question. It does not teach that mankind are as helpless as clay, and are as incapable of repenting and making themselves better, or worse, as clay is. On the contrary, we find that God never condemned an individual, nor a nation, without a trial.

But some one may inquire, Is not the doctrine of

personal and individual fore-ordination and election taught in the Bible? Yes. That doctrine is certainly taught there. But in each instance it refers to *official character*, and not to *personal character*, nor to *salvation*. Thus Jeremiah was ordained "a prophet unto the nations," before he was born. See Jeremiah 1: 5. And a king of Persia named Cyrus was chosen and named a hundred years or more before he was born. See Isaiah 45: 1-4. On the same principle Saul of Tarsus was "a chosen vessel" unto the Lord. See Acts 9: 15. Yet he was not ordained to eternal life without obedience, for he might have been lost after doing his preaching of the Gospel all right. See 1st Corinthians 9: 27. In view of all this we can easily understand that for men to apply to *personal character* that which was written concerning *official character only* has been a mistake. This mistake has caused confusion in the minds of millions. But the fault has been with those who have not read the Bible so as to learn that it is a plain book. On this subject, as well as on all others that pertain to man's salvation, it is a model of plainness.

Now we may consider the controverted subject of *Baptism*. Many persons seem to suppose that this subject is not plain, and cannot be understood by any one with certainty. But this supposition is wrong. We may not understand the Greek language, in which the New Testament was first written. Yet the meaning of the Greek word *baptidzo*, from which we get the word "baptize," may be clearly understood. Let us see by the record given in Acts 8: 35-39.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain

water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."

Does some one say that this record of the Ethiopian's baptism is not plain? If so we may ask, How much plainer could it be? The preacher, on that occasion, was not a simpleton, and, therefore, he did not go "down into the water" to practice sprinkling or pouring. Besides, in Romans 6: 4, we read that we are "buried . . . by baptism," while, in Colossians 2: 12, we read that we are "buried . . . in baptism." Then in Hebrews 10: 22 we learn that Christians have had their "bodies washed with pure water." In view of all this we can understand that water baptism is plainly taught. All who are willing to take the Bible as it is written need not have any doubt on the subject. The baptism taught in the New Testament required "water," "much water," coming "to a certain water," going "down into the water," coming up "out of the water," "born of water," "bodies washed with pure water," the likeness of a burial, also of a resurrection, and of a planting. See John 3: 23; Acts 8: 35-39; John 3: 5; Hebrews 10: 22; Romans 6: 4, 5; Colossians 2: 12. Sprinkling and pouring only require a little water, but do not require coming to a water, going down into the water, coming up out of the water, nor do they require the likeness of a birth, of a burial, a resurrec-

tion, nor of a planting, nor yet anything resembling a washing. In view of all these differences between New Testament baptism, and that which is called "sprinkling," and "pouring" certainly we can easily decide which is right. Here again we find that the Bible is a plain book.

But this is not all. Hundreds of thousands who have been sprinkled, or poured, upon have afterwards desired to be immersed. On the other hand, perhaps, not a dozen who have been immersed have ever desired to be sprinkled or poured upon in order to be scripturally baptized. This shows which is plain, and which is not plain, of the so-called "modes of baptism." As a result we have another evidence that the Bible is a plain book.

A further evidence of the plainness of the Bible, on the subject of baptism, is found in the fact that uneducated people can easily decide the subject for themselves. Many years ago a certain white man in the South, inquired of a negro, why the negroes, generally wished to be immersed when they joined church. The answer was, "I don't know sir, except that we colored people don't have much education, and we have to take the Bible just as it reads." Mention should be here made of another instance that occurred in the South. Two men were talking about the record in the last part of the eighth chapter of Acts. One of them said he could not tell which of the men mentioned there was baptized, as the text says, "and he baptized him." One of those Southern men was a slave-owner, and he said to the other, "I will call one of the most ignorant negro women on my plantation and read to her this record in Acts eighth chapter. If she can't tell which one of the men there mentioned was baptized, I will

admit that the record is not plain." So he called the negro woman, told her what he wanted, and read to her the record. After doing so he asked her which of those two men was baptized. She answered, "De one dat wanted to be, I s'pose, sah." Thus we see that, even on this question of baptism, which learned men have disputed over, the Bible is a plain book.

Here we may introduce a story of a controversy between two preachers about faith and works. The story states that they were discussing the importance of faith and works. One of them contended that more should be said about faith than about works. The other thought that works should be more preached than faith. As they were discussing they came to a river which they needed to cross in a boat that was rowed by the ferryman at that place. They continued their discussion after they were seated in the boat. When they were nearly across the river the ferryman said to them, "Gentlemen, let me settle your dispute. I will name one of my oars *faith* and the other *works*, and I'll work one of them at a time." Then he lifted one of his oars, and held it out of the water, while he worked the other. The boat began going around, instead of straight forward. Then he changed and worked only the other oar, and the boat went around in the opposite direction. Then he worked both oars at once, but dipped one deeper than the other, and pulled harder on it than on the other. As a result the boat again began going around. He next worked the other oar harder, and the boat began to go around in the other direction. Then he said, "Now, gentlemen, you see we could not get over the river by any such plan." Then he said, "But I will now head the boat straight for the other shore, and pull both oars alike." As a result he

was soon across the river. Having landed his passengers he said, "My Bible informs me that the faith which *works by love* is the right kind of faith, and a faith which *does not thus work* is a *dead faith*." See Galatians 5: 6; James 2: 17-26. Here is another evidence that the Bible is a plain book, and that its teachings are easily understood.

A little girl was asked, "What is faith in God?" She answered, "Faith in God is taking God at his word." And another was asked, "What is a parable?" Thinking of the parables of the Savior she answered, saying, "A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." She was right in regard to all the parables of Christ which were intended to illustrate the kingdom of heaven. A parable is an illustration intended to make something plainer than a statement could make it, at least to some minds. The Savior did much of his teaching in parables, and he is the perfect teacher. He set forth the truth he offered to mankind in the plainest manner, and the Book which reveals him is a plain Book to all who will study it aright. That Book is all summed up in Christ. He is the central figure in whom its lines come together. If we will study it aright we shall be able to understand it, and shall be made wise unto salvation.

SERMON NO. III

IS THE BIBLE A DEFENSIBLE BOOK?

The words of the Lord are pure words : as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Psalm 12: 6.

THE question, "Is the Bible a defensible Book?" arises because certain persons have cast reflections against it. But those who cast such reflections do not understand the Bible. They are not acquainted with it, and would not be worth noticing if they did not have influence over others. As their lack of acquaintance with the Bible is willful they do not deserve the admiration of any one, especially of students of the Bible. But many of them pretend to be educated, and, by reason of such pretension, they occupy positions in educational circles. As a result, many persons look up to them, and suppose they are worthy of confidence. But they are all ignorant—willfully ignorant—of the Bible, and therefore do not deserve confidence.

But what is education worth if it does not cause those who have it to be cautious, and careful? Is not the trained, or educated, farmer a careful man in regard to all that pertains to his department? Is not the same true of the trained housekeeper? Is not the trained soldier careful, and cautious, in all that pertains to military life? To ask these questions is to answer them. What shall we say, then, of those who profess to be educated in books, yet are so reckless that, they will cast reflections on the Bible? It is the Book

of the highest pretensions, and is translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Why, then, will any one cast reflections upon that Book without studying it so as to understand it?

The wisest man of ancient Greece said, "Whoever would enter the temple of philosophy, must banish prejudice, passion, and sloth." The truth of this saying cannot be justly questioned. "Prejudice" is pre-judgment, and whoever will pre-judge anything cannot study it with fairness. "Passion" will cause those in whom it is found to be too hasty to study aright. "Sloth" will cause those afflicted with it to be too indifferent to study with care. In view of all this, the saying that we are considering may be called a self-evident truth. Socrates was right when he said, "Whoever would enter the temple of philosophy must banish prejudice, passion, and sloth." And to that saying we may add, Whoever would show that he is a learned man must show that he will not speak against a book which he has never read so as to understand it.

The man who understands the Bible does not speak against it. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be. On the contrary, those who understand it best praise it most, while those who oppose it most know least about it, especially its chief items of doctrine. In order to be admired, loved, and praised, the Bible only needs to be understood. Those who speak against it are, as a rule, wholly ignorant of its general teaching. They show this by their unfairness in speaking against a notable Book that they have never understood. Those churchmen who deny its inspiration, or deny its miracles, may be supposed to have some acquaintance with it. But, when tested, they will all be exposed as flippant specimens of humanity

whose ability is far above their stability, and whose self-esteem is entirely beyond their power of comparison. As a result, their love of popularity, or wish to be celebrated, has taken possession of them. They wish to drift into prominence in a flippant and skeptical generation, by acting a flippant and skeptical part.

After these preliminary remarks we are prepared to consider a few of the defenses of the Bible, as found in its own pages. We do not need to defend the Bible any more than we need to defend a lion. The lion can defend himself if we turn him loose, and the Bible is its own defense if we will allow it to testify in its own behalf. Therefore we should give attention to the first item of testimony recorded in the Bible. It is this: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In later translations the word "heaven" is given in the plural form "heavens." This is correct, and, therefore, we should read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

What may we say of this statement of testimony, or item of evidence? First, we may certainly say that it is certainly appropriate. It begins at the right place, and informs us in regard to the first facts in which we are first interested. When we open our eyes to this life, and look abroad into this world we are first confronted with the sight of the heavens and the earth. The question arises, Whence did they come, or who created them? If some pretender informs us that they came by chance, we should inquire, *Who created that chance?* If some other pretender informs us that they came into existence by "a fortuitous combination of atoms," we should inquire, *Who created those atoms, and who arranged that so-called "fortuitous combination" of them,* so that they could bring into ex-

istence the heavens and the earth with all their wonders? Here the pretender will be put to shame, if he is not lost to a sense of shame. As a result we are left to conclude that the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. We are likewise left to conclude that the Bible is a defensible book.

A preacher of Christ was at the home of a graduate of college who seemed proud of his library. He seemed to take delight in showing his library to that preacher. When the books had been duly referred to, and a few remarks made about them, the preacher inquired, "Did you ever read the Bible much?" "No, I never did," was the response. "I began to read it once, but I was stumped at the first verse. It says, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' There was something intangible about that saying, and I never got any farther. I couldn't understand when that *beginning* was. It was mentioned, and the statement of it was projected in space in, what seemed to me, an intangible form, and I felt I was stumped." In response the preacher said, "Suppose when your mother told you that the first letter of the English alphabet should be called 'a' and the second 'b' you had said, 'There's something intangible about that, and I would like for you to explain it,' do you think you would ever have learned the alphabet? No, sir. The explanation would have required something to be said which you could not understand. But you accepted, by a blind faith, that which your mother, or some one else, told you about the letters of the alphabet, and you learned them. In course of time you were instructed to unite letters in syllables, and syllables in words, and words in sentences. Then you were enabled to under-

stand why those letters should have certain definite names. If you had acted on the same principle in regard to reading the Bible you might have made as good progress in it as you have made in studying the English language." Then the conversation ended between that college graduate and the mentioned preacher of Christ. Who will say that the graduate referred to was anything more than a pretender? Certainly he was not a philosopher? He had not banished "prejudice and passion." On the contrary, he seemed anxious to find something to object to in the Bible and he found it quick. The same is true with all other pretenders.

Now we should consider the third, fourth, and fifth verses of the Bible. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Here we find that the Bible continues to testify aright. After the heavens and the earth had been created, then light was needed. God did not intend that the creatures he had decided to place on the face of the earth should grope in continual darkness. On the contrary, he intended they should be able to see. For this reason he brought light into existence, and separated the light from the darkness. He called the light "Day," and the darkness he called "Night." Such was God's arrangement in the beginning, and such is his arrangement now. The light is still separated from the darkness, and the light is still called "Day," while the darkness is still called "Night." Besides, from noon one day till noon the next day is

still a period that is spoken of as a "Day." Thus the evening and the morning are still counted for a day.

Now let us see what we have learned. God created the heavens and the earth. Then he created light. Next he separated the light from the darkness, and called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. Then he counted the day from noon till noon. In view of all this, we find that as it was in the beginning so it is now, and, as far as we can judge, shall be till the end of time. The arrangement thus far in the Bible is the best, and, from this viewpoint, the Bible is a defensible book. If some one declares that light was made by chance we should ask, *Who made that chance?* If some one says that light came into existence by a kind of evolution, or whirling, or happen-so, we should ask, *Who made that evolution, that whirling, or that happen-so, and who stopped it?*

Now we are prepared to consider the ninth and tenth verses of the chapter before us. "And God said, Let the water under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good." Here we find statements which are in perfect harmony with the conditions which we now behold in regard to the earth and the seas. Besides, we find that these statements imply that the earth was for an indefinite period covered with water. These statements are in perfect harmony with the conclusion of those who profess to be scientists. With one accord they say that the earth was, for a long period, *covered with water*. And here is an illustration of all that may be justly spoken of as "science." All that is really science is in harmony with the Bible,

and only the conclusions which are not science differ from the Bible. Take, for instance, the modern conclusion of science that the blood of all flesh is the life of the flesh. This is in harmony with the words of God in Genesis 9: 4; Leviticus 17: 14; Deuteronomy 12: 23. But while men thought that the life was not in the blood they differed from the Bible and were wrong. In view of all this, we may safely say that the Bible is a defensible book, and that the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver, tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

But before we leave the verses that we have just considered we should inquire, If God did not call the waters to their places, who else could have done it? Certainly man could not. Then who did it? They have not only been called together, but they have been rounded up on the outside of a great part of the earth. The waters with the dry land together make a ball-shaped body, commonly called a "sphere." But who holds the waters in their places? The old saying, "Water seeks its level," is true. Why then does it not roll over the earth? The Bible declares that God has said to the great deep, "Hither shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." See Job 38: 11. And this is the only explanation of the waters uniting with the earth, and with it making a ball. The Bible says of God, "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses." See Psalm 33: 7.

Does some one say that all this has been, and still is, accomplished by the laws of nature? If so we may inquire, *Who made those laws?* and whence came that something which is called *nature*? Did nature have a father or a mother? Did it have a creator, or did it

come of itself? Here the pretender is confused and confounded, chagrined and crushed. The Bible declares that God called the waters to their places, and that he rounded them up into a "heap." It likewise declares that he appointed the bounds of the great deep. Whoever says that somebody else did all this is justly required to tell who that somebody else was and is. He should be required to show the reason for saying that he did it all, and that, therefore, it was not done by the God of the Bible.

Next we should consider the eleventh and twelfth verses of this chapter. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

Here we are informed of that which we may behold every day that we live. We may see the seed of grass, and the seed that is in fruit. In view of this we can understand that the Bible is in harmony with the facts in nature on this subject, as well as on all other subjects. Do some say that all this could have been written by any man of careful thought, and thus the Bible may be only the work of careful writers? In response we may safely say that we need not to discuss the question, *Who wrote the Bible?* At least, that is not the most important inquiry. The first and chief question is, *Who created or made this world as we now see it?* We find a material world before us, and about us, with its thousands of mysteries, and we need to inquire, *Who created it, and set it in order?* Just now we are considering, *Who made the grass to grow, and to pro-*

duce seed which will produce after its kind? Then who made the fruit tree to bear fruit with seed in it that will produce after its kind? Will some one say that this was all made by chance? If so, we should inquire, *Who made that chance?* Was chance eternal and infinite in power and goodness? If so, then it deserves to be called God, and worshipped as God. But where is the man who has ventured to say that chance is an eternal and infinite power? Human recklessness has not gone that far. The truth is, those who object to the Bible do not propose to inform us in any definite manner of the origin of this material world. They simply object to the Biblical record of it. What is worse, they try to cast reflections on that record so as to cause doubt with reference to it. All this is unfair and dishonorable. Infidelity has tried to overthrow the Bible by direct attacks upon it, and has failed, utterly failed. Infidels have, therefore, decided to do their work by insinuations and reflections which would cause doubt with reference to the Bible. Their latest and meanest efforts in this direction are found in the reflections against the Bible that are injected into school books. The man who tries to poison men is a bad character. But the man who tries to poison innocent children is a disgrace to the age in which he lives. Yet this is the kind of disgrace that is justly charged against the authors of many school books.

Now we are prepared to consider the record offered to us concerning the lights which have been set in the heavens. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth:

and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good."

Now, what may we say of the record that we have just read? Can we find any fault with it, or with anything that it mentions? A story is told of Napoleon Bonaparte to this effect: When he was on his way to Egypt on board a vessel he heard certain of his generals one night discussing the question, "Is there a God?" After they had discussed it a long time, and had reached the negative conclusion, he stepped out on the deck before them and said, "Gentlemen, I have listened to your discussion, and heard your conclusion—that there is no God." Then waving his hand toward the starry heavens he inquired, "Will you please tell me who made all those up there?" and stepped back from among them. To Napoleon's penetrating mind the existence of the stars was sufficient evidence to prove the existence of that supreme Being called God. He knew that he could not place a star in the heavens, not to speak of holding it there, and he knew that to do so was beyond the power of any other man. He could not put the semblance of a star on his own coat so that it would remain there. Nor can any other man. Who then made the stars? Who made the sun and the moon? Who appointed their courses which they follow from day to day, from night to night, from week to week, from month to month, year to year, from century to century, and from age to age? Who gave them their fixed positions in which they remain in myster-

ious constancy? *Man did not.* Who then created them and arranged them? Did they create and arrange themselves? To ask this question is to answer it in the negative.

But consider them. Can we find any fault with them? Do they not give such light as we generally need, and do they not serve for signs and seasons, days and years? To ask these questions is to answer them in the affirmative. Man cannot suggest an improvement on the sun, the moon, nor the stars. They all give sufficient light without giving too much, and they are arranged exactly right in every particular. As they were arranged in the beginning so they remain at the time now present.

All human machinery wears out, and before wearing out it sometimes needs repair. But the divine machinery remains the same. A good astronomer can calculate the time of an eclipse backward, or forward, and to the very hour and minute, for many years. But such certainty is not found in the running of any kind of human machinery. The Bible declares that the machinery of the heavens and the earth was arranged, set in motion, and is continued, by divine power. The constancy of such arrangement, such motion, and such continuance, proves that the Bible is right, and thus that it is a defensible Book.

Let us next consider the twentieth and twenty-first verses. "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

Here we learn that the waters were commanded to bring forth the flying fowl and fish, of all kinds. The resemblance between them we can easily understand. The fowl swims in the air, while the fish swims in the water; or the fowl flies through the air, while the fish flies through the water. Both have the right shape for easy and swift motion, and both are above criticism by man. That man is yet unborn who would say that a fish has not the right shape, nor the right fins, nor the right kind of a tail, to get through the water aright. The same may be said of the flying fowl in regard to getting through the air. Every motion of the fish, and every motion of the fowl, is easy and graceful in the extreme. The perfection of beauty is found in the domain of fish and flying fowl. Then think of the fowl breathing air, and of the fish breathing water. Think also of the fowl dying in the water, and of the fish dying in air. Who arranged all this? Whence came all these wondrous adaptations and beauties in the wondrous domains of fish and fowl? All these adaptations, these wonders, and beauties, defy criticism from man. They are beyond his fault-finding, critical, disposition, even when he is in his most contemptible frame of mind. The conclusion is, therefore, unavoidable that all shades and grades of fowls and fishes came from God. Therefore the Bible is a defensible book.

But this is not all. In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of this chapter we read, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

Here we are informed that the earth was commanded to bring forth beasts, cattle, and creeping things. And here we find another evidence that the Bible is a defensible Book. It is the only book in which the origin of all the lower orders of creation is clearly stated, and clearly accredited to a reasonable source. All books on heathen mythology are vague and indefinite at this point, or are so unreasonable that the infidel can laugh at them. But he does not laugh at the Biblical account of the origin of the animal kingdom. On the contrary, he hates it. This account is so clear and convincing that it troubles the infidel. He fears that others will believe it, and seems to fear that it is true. Such fears do not trouble him in regard to the gods of the heathen, nor in regard to that which is accredited to them, in heathen mythology. He can talk and laugh concerning the superstition of the heathen. But he acts very differently when he is confronted with the Bible, especially with the gospel of Christ. Even the account of creation as found in the first chapter of Genesis annoys him. Yes, and the account here given of the origin of the cattle kind, the beast kind, and of the creeping things, is sufficient to annoy him. It is so plain, so clear, and so convincing. Besides, he knows that he could not create anything of these kinds of beings. He could not even create a mosquito, nor a toad. He would not know where to begin, nor where to get the material from with which to begin. His creative powers would be stranded on the wing of a mosquito, or on the wink of a toad. But some one has made myriads of animals, and of reptiles and of insects. They seem to be of every variety, shade, and grade. *Who made them?* The Bible declares, God made them. Does some one venture to say that they were made by

chance? If so, we may justly inquire, *Who made that chance?* Here the advocacy of chance, as a creative power, will end, and we shall be left to conclude that the Biblical account of creation is true, and the Bible is a defensible book. All other conclusions are indefinite, vague, weak, wavering, absurd. Those who believe in gods that they can carry on their shoulders, or in their pockets, are too visionary to deserve the confidence of reasonable beings. The same is true of all who suppose that this world, with all its wonders, came into existence by the power of chance, or by something they call evolution, or by a kind of happen-so. They will not venture to inform us who, they suppose, was the author of such power.

Next we should consider the account given in the first chapter of Genesis of the creation of man. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Here we are informed that man was created in the image of his Maker, and given dominion over all the lower orders of creation, also that he was commanded to subdue the earth. This is the Biblical statement of man's position and commission. As it was in the beginning, so it is now, and shall be to the end. God in-

tended man to be the chief of his earthly beings, and to have the rule over all other earthly beings. He even intended that he should have dominion over the entire earth. In view of such intention concerning man God honored him with the divine image, or likeness. The Bible informs us that God has eyes and a nose, has ears and nostrils, has a right hand and a left hand, has a face and has back parts. This being true we can understand that man's body bears the image of its Maker. Though God is a spirit, and does not encompass himself with a material body, as far as we are informed, yet he is not a shapeless spirit. But he has a form, and that form is indicated by the form that man has. Here, then, is man's chief dignity. He bears the image of his Maker, and in his image he differs from the lower orders of nature. Instead of man receiving his image from the lower orders of creation, by a process called "evolution," the Bible informs us that man received his image from God. This image is so sacred in God's sight that he has based capital punishment on it. In Genesis 9: 6 we read, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." This statement is in perfect harmony with the differences which are found between man and every other animal. Man is more upright in form than any other animal, and he has powers of speech beyond those of any other animal. His hand, and eyes, and ears, are unlike those of all other animals. The idea that man came from the lower orders, by a process called "evolution," should not be accepted because those who advocate it cannot tell who arranged that process, nor who started it, nor who stopped it. *That idea is a baseless assumption, without reason.* It is a foundling whose existence has been

projected by an abnormal condition of which every reasonable human being should be ashamed. It is ditch-begotten and hag-born.

Man received his image from above, rather than from beneath, and stands between his Maker, and all that is below him. The idea that he originated from them, and then became their chief ruler, contradicts the saying that a stream cannot rise higher than its fountain, and is contrary to all reason. Those who adopt that idea call on their imagination for connecting links which facts do not furnish. They balance an equation by appeals to their own fancy, and show that they are neither mathematicians nor logicians. They are strangers to sound reasoning on this subject, and their efforts to satisfy themselves do not compliment either their heads or their hearts. They seem to discard their common sense and common honesty in order to maintain the position of a visionist.

But before we leave the first chapter of Genesis we should consider the reasons which are here found for regarding the word "day," as here used, in the ordinary sense of that word. First, we are informed that "God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." This is the arrangement that we still have. Second, we are informed, that "the evening and the morning were the first day." The same is still true. From noon till noon makes a day of twenty-four hours, and this is regarded as the best way to count time even yet by many who desire strict accuracy. Third, this statement about the evening and the morning making a day is not only made in the first chapter of Genesis, but it is repeated five times in that chapter.

Here then are six reasons for regarding the word

"day," as used in the first chapter of Genesis, in the ordinary sense of that word. Then the statement about the division of the light from the darkness, and calling the light day, and the darkness night, makes a seventh reason. We find here exactly that which we still have in use, namely, the word "day" to refer to the light part of every twenty-four hours, and the word "night" to refer to the dark part of every twenty-four hours. Then we find that the word "day" is here used to cover the entire period of twenty-four hours when the question of light and darkness is not under consideration. This use of words is common. The word "man," for instance, is used in a restricted sense when contrasted with woman, but is used in a general sense when not thus contrasted. But this is not all that we find in this chapter in regard to the word "day." On the contrary, we read that God made "two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." This is the exact arrangement which still exists. Therefore we find eight clear reasons for accepting the word "day," as found in this chapter, in the ordinary use of that word. Finally, in the next chapter we find the seventh day mentioned as the day of God's rest. Then, in Exodus 20: 11, we find this: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." We find also that, for this reason, God commanded the Jews to keep the seventh day as a day of rest, and that day was a period of twenty-four hours. In Deuteronomy 5: 15 we learn that God required the Jew to observe that day because he had been in the land of Egypt, and had been brought out by the Lord's power. This shows that only the Jew was required to observe that day.

But in view of all that has just been set forth, what may we say of those who suppose that each day, mentioned in Genesis first chapter, was made up of a million years, or more? We may say that they are visionists of the worst kind, and do not deserve the confidence of their fellow mortals. At the same time we may safely say that the Bible and the material world, as well as all science—all classified knowledge—are in perfect harmony, and, therefore, the Bible is a defensible book. As such it deserves the constant and unreserved confidence of all mankind.

Now we are prepared to consider Genesis 8: 22. Soon after the flood was ended God said to Noah, "While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." That was God's decision over four thousand years ago, and it was written in the first part of the Bible over three thousand years ago. That which God then decided upon still continues, and we are all satisfied with it, even if we are not as thankful for it as we should be. Local disturbances have occurred in regard to seedtime and harvest, but those seasons have never ceased entirely, nor been disturbed all over the earth at any one time. In view of all this we may again say that the Bible is a defensible book, and deserves our entire confidence at all times, and in all circumstances.

But this is not all. In Genesis 12: 3 we read that God said to Abraham, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee." That saying has never been recalled nor modified, and, as a result, every nation that has mistreated the Jews has been severely rebuked. All the ancient nations that mistreated them went down to rise no more. Think of

Assyria, Babylon, the Greeks, and the Romans! Think of the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Edomites! These, and other nations, oppressed the Jews and they went down. On the other hand, all nations that have treated the Jews well have been favored of God, and have lived. When the Jews went wrong God placed his own punishment on them, but he has never allowed other nations to add to that punishment. Those who wish definite information on this subject should read Isaiah 47: 1-6, and the twenty-fifth chapter of Ezekiel. When God placed his punishment on Cain he did not intend that any one should add to it. (Genesis 4: 15.) On that principle he has treated the Jews, and in Proverbs 24: 17, 18 we find instruction for all mankind on the same subject. But the historian who overlooks God's decision in regard to this question, as it pertains to the Jews, is destined to err in his conclusions concerning the chief cause of the rise and fall of nations. Thus even from the viewpoint of secular history the Bible is a safeguard, and, in this respect, as in all others, is a defensible book.

The Bible may be safely spoken of as the Book of man and the Book of God, the Book of time and the Book of eternity, the Book of earth and the Book of heaven, the Book of salvation and the Book of condemnation, the Book of eternal happiness and the Book of eternal woe. It is the Book which all mankind should read and study all the days of their responsible period on earth so as to understand it and obey it to their own rejoicing, and to God's honor and glory. It is worthy of the confidence of the philosopher, the statesman, the ruler of every position and power. It is the father's counsellor, the mother's guide, the child's wonder. It is intended for all classes and con-

ditions of mankind. It will humble the exalted, and exalt the humble, in proportion as they will obey it will bring all who practically accept its teachings into a common brotherhood on earth, and will exalt them to eternal glory when the earth will have passed away.

SERMON NO. IV

THE RIGHT USE OF REASON

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. Acts 24: 25.

THE Apostle Paul made the right use of reason when he stood before a certain governor of Judea named Felix. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. This means that he reasoned of right-doing toward others, and of right-doing toward himself. It means, likewise, that he reasoned of such right-doing in view of the final judgment. This was certainly the right use of reason, for it was the common-sense use of reason. All who use their reason aright certainly use it as the common sense of mankind will approve. The same is true of every one who lives as the gospel requires. Paul referred to this when he wrote, "But by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." See 2nd Corinthians 4: 2. This means that the gospel requires such conduct as the common sense, and, thus, the common conscience, of mankind will approve.

Reason and common sense cannot be separated. Common sense is the power which enables mankind to be reasonable. In proportion as nature has gifted us with the kind of brain necessary for us to exercise

common sense we can reason aright, and thus show ourselves to be reasonable beings. The two gifts that are necessary in this direction are comparison and continuity. We must have the kind of brain that will enable us to compare objects, and the kind that will enable us to hold to the results of comparing them. If we have strong comparison, but weak continuity we shall be able to show common sense in our conclusions, but shall not be able to hold those conclusions with constancy. As a result we shall be like Reuben — the eldest son of ancient Jacob. "The excellency of dig-nity, and the excellency of power; unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." (Genesis 49: 3, 4.) This was his father's sentence upon him, and it may be justly applied to many others, who are of a similar disposition. They have clearness of thought, with strength and power of action, but cannot excel because they are lacking in stability, or continuity. This lacking, or defect, is partly natural, and partly educational. But as this is a question for mental science, we should not consider it further in a religious discourse, except to say that all educators who say, or imply, that all ex-cellency, strength, and power, may be attained by training, are grossly wrong. The only safe statement that can be made to any one in regard to education is that by close and constant study nature's gifts may be discovered and trained. Education cannot bestow those gifts.

Now we are prepared to consider the Apostle Paul's use of reason in his speech to Governor Felix. The divine record informs us that he "reasoned of right-eousness." As previously stated, this means that he reasoned of doing right toward others. Historians inform us that Felix was a bad man. He was a poli-

tician, and of the kind that did not scruple to do anything which he thought would advance his cause. Step by step he had climbed the slimy ladder of fame until he had become governor of a province. But in addition to that which uninspired historians have said concerning Felix, the evangelist Luke informs us that he was a bad man. In his record of him he declares this: "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener and communed with him: but after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room; and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." See Acts 24: 26, 27. This shows that Felix desired to be bribed by Paul, and shows that if he had been offered a sufficient sum to please him, he would have released Paul from prison. But as neither Paul, nor any of his friends, made him such an offer, he left Paul in prison, and to please the Jews left him bound when his own office was taken away from him.

How much Paul knew of the history of Felix we are not informed, but we may justly suppose that he was not entirely ignorant of his history. Besides, on general principles, Paul was justified in reasoning with him in regard to "righteousness," or right-doing toward others. This is a subject all mankind should seriously consider, and especially those who are in official position, and, thus, are, most of their time, engaged in dealing with the welfare of others. Above all other persons they should consider the importance of *doing right to others*. Besides, official mistakes, or mistakes which pertain to the official work of those who are in office, are the most dangerous. They are the most far-reaching in results, and are the most difficult to correct. In view of all this, we can understand why

Paul reasoned with Governor Felix in regard to "righteousness." By so doing he made the right use of his own reason.

In the fourth chapter of Genesis we read of the first man who ever disgraced this earth by acting the part of a murderer and liar. In a certain speech that he made to God he implied that he was not his brother's keeper, and, therefore, was not responsible for his brother's welfare. That man's name was Cain. After he had killed his brother, God asked him, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" And he answered the Lord, saying, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" By thus answering he implied that he was not his brother's keeper, and, therefore, was not responsible for his brother's welfare. The same is implied by all who misuse, mistreat, damage, or, in any other respect, injure, any one of their fellow mortals. They follow the example of Cain, in proportion as they injure their fellow mortals, and they adopt the doctrine of Cain in proportion as they try to excuse themselves by saying or doing that which implies that they are not their brother's keeper. They are guilty of unrighteous treatment of others, and then adopt an unrighteous doctrine in order to excuse themselves. Governor Felix was one of that number, and Paul made a right use of reason when he reasoned with him of righteousness.

Those of us who have learned this much, are prepared to consider the doctrine which the Apostle Paul declared in Romans 13: 7,—*"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."* This means that we are related to others while we live, and will be when we shall come to the hour of death. Our relations determine our obligations, and, as a result, we

are all required to reason, with all whom we can approach, in regard to doing right. But such reasoning on our part, will accomplish but little good if we do not set an example in the same direction. The old saying, "Example speaks louder than precept," is still true. Therefore, those of us who have learned how to use our reason aright toward others should first impose its right use on ourselves. We must correct our own conduct and speech, and then we may, with good effect, urge such correction on others.

Now we are prepared to consider unrighteous speeches and actions, toward others, in their bearings and relations. The first evil effect of unrighteousness toward others is on those who are guilty of it. We need only to mention that all unrighteousness injures those who are guilty thereof. If they are not aware of it, at the time they become guilty of it, they are, nevertheless, injured in the judgment of all who know of it. But if they know of it themselves, then they are injured in their own judgment as well as in the judgment of others. Finally, if they try to excuse themselves in their unrighteousness they inflict another injury on themselves. In view of all this, we can clearly understand that every unrighteous word, or act, that affects others is a twofold, and, may be, even a threefold, injury to those guilty of it. For these reasons we should all do our best to avoid all unrighteous words and deeds, and should reason with our fellow mortals in order to lead them in the way of righteousness if they have departed from that way.

Mankind should correct their wrongs, first of all, *for their own sake*. A business man said, when he was overpaid in a certain settlement with one of his patrons, "Go, call that man back—he's paid me too much mon-

ey." One of his clerks said, "Let him go, he'll never know it." "Get out of here," said the business man—"won't I know it?" This indicates something of the injury that all our unrighteousness toward others will do to us when we know of it. But, as previously stated, even when we do not know of it, yet it will injure us in the judgment of all who do know of it. Then, if when we do know of it, we try to excuse ourselves in regard to it, we inflict on ourselves another injury. Who then can afford to be unrighteous toward others? Who can afford to break himself down in the judgment of others by wrong conduct? Who can afford by such conduct to break himself down in his own judgment? Finally, *who can afford to break himself down before his God, at whose judgment seat he shall finally stand?*

After considering all this we may safely say, that if unrighteousness could not affect any, except those who are guilty of it, yet a right use of reason would be to dissuade mankind from all unrighteousness of every shade and degree. We should try to *save them from themselves*, by turning them from the evil that they inflict on themselves by every unrighteous word and deed. The glory of a good conscience is beyond comparison with all earthward glory, and this glory must be sought by all who would escape the degradation and misery, the wormwood and gall, of a guilty conscience, which will be in the mind and heart as a worm that dies not, and as a fire that is not quenched.

But we have thus far considered only one bearing of unrighteousness—the bearing that, as the learned say, is SUBJECTIVE, and, therefore, the bearing which affects those who commit unrighteousness. Now we shall proceed to consider the, so-called, OBJECTIVE bearing of all unrighteousness—the bearing that affects

those upon whom it is inflicted. To such bearing of wrong doing Scotland's peasant poet referred when he wrote these memorable words:

“Man's inhumanity to man
Has made countless thousands mourn.”

Such inhumanity is unrighteousness which inflicts an injury that is either physical or mental, or, perhaps, is both physical and mental. Besides, it is generally inflicted by the strong upon the weak, by the great upon the small, or by the rich upon the poor. Those upon whom it is inflicted are “made to mourn,” and, in many instances, their mourning is in bitterness of spirit. They are often helpless under the power of those who injure them, and they mourn because they are helpless.

“All unrighteousness is sin.” See 1st John 5: 17. Even if those on whom it is inflicted do not know of it, yet it works injury to them, and is a sin in the sight of God. But in proportion as they know of it they suffer a mental, and, perhaps, a moral, injury. Israel's wisest monarch declared, “Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad.” (Ecclesiastes 7: 7.) The same is yet true. In proportion as mankind possess wisdom they feel outraged when they are oppressed, and they become maddened by reason of oppression. Moreover, in proportion as they become maddened they are injured both mentally and physically. What is worse, they are often driven, by the oppression they suffer, to regard all who are above them, in power, as their enemies. They become skeptical in regard to most of their fellow mortals, and then they are morally injured, and, perhaps, in a fatal degree. As a result many of them are ready for mob-law, anarchy, and assassination of rulers. Others settle down into a sullen mood, and

cannot be benefited even by those who really desire to befriend them. In view of all these evil results of unrighteousness, we can understand that the right use of reason requires those who have corrected their own lives to reason with their fellows in regard to righteousness, or doing right toward others.

Now we are prepared to consider the right use of reason in a Godward direction. Man's righteousness is not all summed up in doing right toward mankind. He is required to be righteous toward God, and all unrighteousness toward God is condemned in the Bible. As an illustration of the divine teaching on this subject we should consider Romans 1: 18-25. In those scriptures Paul wrote thus concerning God and the heathen: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness: because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise they became fools: and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things: wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped, and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

From all that has just been read we may learn that all heathenism is the result of holding "the truth in unrighteousness," and this means unrighteousness toward God, and thus means the wrong use of reason. Take Egypt, for instance; that most ancient of nations. The descendants of Noah who settled themselves in Egypt knew God, but a time came when their descendants "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and, therefore, they turned from him. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools," and "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man," and even like unto the lower orders of creation. Therefore, all heathenism is the result of unrighteousness toward God, and, thus, is the result of the wrong use of reason with reference to him.

But this is not all. The Jews were guilty along the same line. In Malachi 1: 6-8 we find these sayings: "A son honoreth his father and a servant his master: if then I be a father; where is mine honor? If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name: and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts." Then in Malachi 3: 8, 9 we read these sayings: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

By considering these sayings we learn that when the Jews offered the lame and blind in sacrifice they were *charged with robbing God*. The doom of those who thus robbed God is thus expressed in Malachi 1: 4—
“But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth a corrupt thing.” God required the best of the Jews, for they owed their land, and all their wealth, to him. For this reason they were “cursed” when they withheld the best, and offered to him that which was corrupt, and which they could spare without feeling it, or damaging their flock. By so doing they acted unrighteously toward God, and were brought under condemnation.

And what may we say of ourselves? We owe all that we are, and all that we have, and all that we hope to be, and hope to have, unto God. He is the author of life, and of all its blessings. He is the one in whom we live and move and have our being. We are indebted to him for every day that we live, and for every breath that we breathe. Therefore, we should give to God the best that we have, and all that he requires. He calls upon us to present our bodies “a living sacrifice,” and we should do so. He commands us to glorify him in our body, and in our spirit which belong to him because he has bought them with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ. See Romans 12: 1; 1st Corinthians 6: 19, 20. But suppose that, instead of so doing we withhold ourselves, and do not give our minds and hearts and lives to him, but use our thoughts, affections, and bodies, in the service of the world. *Do we not thereby rob God?*

Suppose we give ourselves wholly to the service of the world during our early and vigorous time of life, intending to yield to the service of God in old age, or

when we shall become feeble. Do we not, thereby, intend to rob God by withholding the best, and by offering to him the worst? Such intention is like the meanness of the Jew who withheld the best of his flock, and offered to God a blind, or lame, animal. In reasoning with the Jew, on that subject, God said, "Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?" If the people of any district of country would wish to give to their governor a horse, would they even think of giving to him a blind, or lame, horse? Not unless they would wish to insult him. Why then will any sons or daughters of mankind think of giving to the Governor of the universe an old, or diseased, body, especially while they have youth and vigor to give? If the gospel does not reach us till we are old and diseased, then God, in his mercy, will accept our obedience, in old age and infirmity, even to the utmost. But let us beware of arranging to serve the devil while we are young, and cherish the intention of serving God when we shall become old. Such an intention is a deliberate planning to rob God of that which is due to him, and is, therefore, gross unrighteousness. The right use of reason, on the part of those who have yielded themselves to God, is to dissuade all others from being unrighteous toward him, and to mankind. Our efforts to dissuade them from unrighteousness should be urged in view of the judgment to come.

Now we come back to the scripture which we have begun to consider, as a text for this sermon. The Apostle Paul reasoned with Governor Felix "of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." The Greek word which is translated by the English word "temperance," in the New Testament, means *self-con-*

trol. This shows that it means right treatment of ourselves for our own benefit. Of course, when we benefit ourselves, by controlling ourselves, we benefit those with whom we associate. This is true in the family, in the church, in society, generally, likewise in the business and political world. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Thus wrote the man Solomon in Proverbs 16: 32, and the doctrine that he then wrote is still true. The person who has good self control is the one who is exalted in character. The beauty, perfection, grandeur, and glory, of manhood and womanhood consist chiefly in perfect self-control by reason of right convictions. Those who maintain perfect self-control are a blessing to themselves and to all with whom they associate. The recollection which others will have of them, even after their departure from this life, will be blessed. Thus we can readily understand that to reason with mankind in regard to the importance of perfect self-control is a right use of reason.

Governor Felix may have been an immoral man, and, if so, that was a special reason why the Apostle Paul spoke to him of temperance, or self-control. Paul was a historian, also a discerner of spirits, and, very likely, knew well the character of the governor whom he addressed at Cæsarea. But even if that governor was not immoral, yet the doctrine of self-control was important for him to consider. "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Thus wrote Solomon in Proverbs 14: 29, and that which he wrote on this subject is still true. Whenever, and wherever, self-control is shown it is a mark of good understanding, and, thus, is a mark of wisdom.

A lawyer of much experience declared that a majority of the suits that are entered in courts would never be heard of if those who enter them would only sleep one night more before they give them into the hands of lawyers. Passion let loose has been the secret of the ruin of millions. It has been the cause of strife and contentions, crimes and criminations, from the beginning of wrong-doing till the present, and will be to the end of time. The unrestrained temper is a constant mischief-worker, and a constant cause of unhappiness. Not one marriage in a thousand would be ended by a divorce if both husbands and wives would always control their tempers as they should. Neighbors would, generally, remain neighborly, and friends remain friendly, if temperance, or self-control, would be always cultivated and shown in the ordinary relations of life. Christians would remain faithful to the Lord, and kind to each other, if they would only control their tempers aright. In view of all this we can understand why the Apostle Paul reasoned with Governor Felix in regard to temperance, or self-control.

But "the judgment to come" is the subject that should now be considered in this discourse. Man's existence will not end with the death of his body. When God created man he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and, by so doing, he gave to him a spirit which does not die with the body. On the contrary, it is destined to exist beyond this life, and even into the ages of eternity. As far as we are informed it is destined to exist FOREVER. By reason of such destiny man is on trial in course of his life in the flesh, and, after the end of this life, he will be brought to judgment. In 2nd Corinthians 5: 10 Paul declares, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." To this he adds, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men." In Hebrews 10: 31 that same apostle declares, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Now we are prepared to understand why Paul reasoned with Felix of "the judgment to come." God has "appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained," namely, by the Lord Jesus Christ. In view of this "he now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." See Acts 17: 30, 31. This means that mankind are responsible to God, and must, finally, give an account to him for the deeds done in the body. Therefore Paul, in another place, wrote after this manner: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

Man is a creature who is bound for eternity, and is destined to spend the endless ages, either at God's right hand, or forever separated from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Therefore the most important question for him to consider during his life in the flesh is, *Where shall I spend eternity?* And as this question will be decided, at the final judgment, man should live his entire life on earth *in view of the judgment*. The right use of reason, therefore, is made

when we use it to convince ourselves, and then to convince others, that we should *do right toward others, and maintain self-control, in view of the final judgment.* This is the highest and best use that we can make of our reason during our entire lifetime.

All is well that ends well, and all is a failure that ends in a failure. But in order for our life to end well we must go down to death fully prepared for the judgment. Men may be successful in this life, and may even ride on the topmost wave of success. But if they do not prepare for death and the judgment they will go down to the grave under condemnation. As a result their life will end in doubt, if not in despair, and the ending of it will be the beginning of misery that cannot be described. Therefore, we may again say, the highest and best use of reason is made when we use it to convince ourselves and others to prepare for the final judgment. For, then will the sentence be pronounced which will determine man's eternal destiny.

An aged disciple of Christ was accustomed to say, in course of his advanced years, that the first moment of his spirit's deliverance from his body into the hands of angels, he believed would be of such inexpressible delight that it would overbalance all the trials of this life. His idea was, that as soon as his faith would be changed to knowledge and that he would know that he would be safe for the ages of eternity, then his joy would be perfect, and would thus remain forever. That aged disciple was correct in his idea. In the light of Luke 16: 26 we are assured that God sends angels to bear the redeemed spirits to "Abraham's bosom," which must mean paradise, or the state in which such spirits will be held till the resurrection of the just. Therefore, as soon as such spirits will be

released from their bodies they will be in the company of angels of God, and by them will be taken to the resting place which God has prepared for the redeemed till the Lord Jesus will come to gather all his faithful ones unto himself. In view of all this, we may again say that the highest and best use of reason is made when we use it to convince ourselves, and others, that we should always be prepared for death and the judgment.

But suppose that a man will arise and say, "There is no God," and will, therefore, say, "I do not believe that I shall have any existence beyond this life." Such a man we may answer in the words of David, king of Israel, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm 14: 1.) For a man to say that he does not BELIEVE there is any God might be a reasonable saying, for he would thereby imply that he has not become acquainted with sufficient facts and truths to *convince him* that a being exists who is worthy of being called God. But when a man boldly says, "There is no God," he pronounces upon all evidence with which he is acquainted, and upon all that is beyond his acquaintance. He not only declares that he has not been CONVINCED of God's existence, but he implies that in all the entire domain of fact and truth and reason evidence cannot be found which WILL CONVINCЕ him. Such a man pronounces on all that he KNOWS, and on all that he does NOT KNOW. David declares that the man who does all this is a "fool," and we should not dispute what David says on this subject. The fact that David lived in the Jewish Age does not, in this instance, prevent his words from being justly applied to the Gospel Age. The man who says, "There is no God," may still be classed with fools.

But what may we say of the man who simply declares that he is not convinced of God's existence? Such a man may be reasonable, and we may decide whether he is reasonable by inquiring whether he is deeply concerned on this question. If he is indifferent in regard to it, and plunges forward in life without trying to learn of God's existence, he is certainly unreasonable, and is closely related to David's fool. And this is exactly the disposition of nearly all of those who say they are not convinced of the existence of one, true, and living, God, and that Jesus Christ is his Son and our Savior. With very few exceptions they consent to remain grossly ignorant of the Bible, and do not use their reason aright in considering the evidence found in nature.

David informs us that, "The heavens declare the glory of God." See Psalm 19: 1. Then Paul declares that God's "eternal power and Godhead" "are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made." See Romans 1: 20. Napoleon Bonaparte said that the existence of the stars was sufficient evidence to his mind to prove the existence of God. Thomas Paine, a noted Deist, said that he believed in God, as the creator of the universe, to avoid "the tenfold greater difficulty, of accounting for the existence of this world without such belief." These witnesses are all in harmony with each other, and they inform us of the conclusion to which the right use of reason will impel mankind in all ages and generations. Man cannot use his reason aright, and yet conclude that the material world, which confronts him on every hand, came into existence of itself, nor by chance. Its vastness, its wonders, its constancy, all forbid such a conclusion in those who make the right use of their reason.

But what may we say of those who profess to believe in God, as creator and upholder of the material universe, yet do not believe the Bible to be God's written revelation to man? They all show that they are grossly ignorant of the Bible. Thomas Paine was prominent among those who make up that class, and he confessed that he wrote much of his book titled "Age of Reason" without a copy of the Bible near him. By that confession he showed that he did not make the right use of his reason; for a man certainly acts unreasonably when he criticises a book of high pretensions without a copy of it to consult. As a result of his unreasonable procedure Thomas Paine blundered in nearly every reference that he made to the Bible, and he misrepresented it on nearly every page of his writings.

That which is true of Thomas Paine is true of all other infidels concerning the Bible, and is true of all other classes of persons who err concerning it. Those who understand the Bible never speak against it, and they are careful not to misrepresent it. Besides, all those who make the right use of their reason in dealing with the Bible will be careful not to reflect against it before they have studied it, so as to understand it, from beginning to end. Israel's wisest monarch said, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him." (Proverbs 29: 20.) And what is more unreasonably hasty than for a man to speak against any volume that he has not studied with care, especially a volume of such pretensions as the Bible is?

Now let us consider another phase of this subject, and, first of all, let us use an illustration. Suppose that several men enter a lumber yard to decide how

much lumber, and how many different kinds of lumber, are in it. Would it be the right use of reason for them to stand off and guess at the amount, and kinds of lumber, in each pile? *Certainly not.* But reason would suggest that they should measure it all by a standard, or rule, which is generally acknowledged to be correct. On the same principle, we may ask, Is it the right use of reason for men to stand off and guess how much truth is in the many religious creeds that are offered to mankind by religious reformers? *Certainly not.* But reason suggests that all to whom such creeds are offered should take the Bible—the standard that is generally admitted to be correct—and study it till they understand how to use it, and then measure those creeds by it, even in the details of their doctrines.

In view of all this, what may we say of those school teachers and college professors who spend a part of their time before their classes casting reflections against the Bible? They are not employed to teach pupils in the Bible, nor to teach them against it. What is worse, they are generally so grossly ignorant of the Bible that they are not fit to make any remarks concerning it. Why then will they misuse any part of their time in reflecting against the Bible? The least that can be reasonably said concerning them is, that they *do not make the right use of their reason.* The most ordinary use of their reason would suggest that they should *remain silent* concerning that which they *have not studied with care.* Common justice, to the author of a book, of any kind, requires that we should not proclaim either in favor of it, or against it, while we are ignorant of its contents. Moreover, what is that education worth which does not teach us the importance of precaution in speech, as well as in the formation of

opinions, especially concerning that which we have not studied? The first essential in education is that degree of care which results in accuracy. How then can we have confidence in an educational pretender who has not learned the first essential to an education that is worthy of the name? Such a pretender is unrighteous toward himself, toward his fellow mortals, and toward God. And he seems indifferent in regard to his final destiny in "the judgment to come."

In view of the wrong use of reason that we have just considered, we are prepared to consider the wrong use of it as made by those who exercise all their reasoning powers to gather fame, or gather money, or money's worth. All earthly fame shall pass away, and all material wealth shall be dissolved. As a result, all those who exercise their reasoning powers to gather such things are destined to be disappointed. Even if they can hold such things till the end of life they will then be taken from them, and will pass into eternal despair. Man is an eternity-bound creature, and the right use of his reason suggests that he should exercise his best thoughts in preparing for eternity instead of coveting the things which pertain simply to this life, especially its material wealth. Let us consider the Savior's teaching on this subject.

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought with himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? and he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and

my goods: and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night, shall thy soul be required of thee; then, whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." See Luke 12: 15-21. This lesson does not need any comment in order to make it plain. It shows that those who occupy their thoughts chiefly for the things of this life are FOOLS before God, and are liable to be disappointed, even in regard to the length of time they will be suffered to enjoy those things.

Having taken this view of the wrong uses that many are disposed to make of reason we can turn with confirmed confidence to the record of Paul's speech before Felix. He reasoned with him of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," and in so doing he certainly made the right use of reason. In proportion as we do the same we make the right use of our reason. The highest and best use of reason is to exercise it in learning what is right, in doing right ourselves, and in persuading others to do the same, in view of "the judgment to come." Then all mankind will receive their eternal reward.

SERMON NO. V

PAUL'S EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL DISCIPLINE

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. 1st Corinthians 9: 27.

IN this statement of Paul about himself we are informed that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection. We are informed, likewise, that he did it in order to avoid a certain result. That result he expressed by the word "castaway." That is to say, in order to avoid becoming "a castaway" he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection. This example of Paul we should all consider with the utmost care.

But before giving our attention to this example as it deserves, we should consider the fact that Paul here implies that he was liable to be lost, and needed to be on his guard in order to avoid being lost. He was called to preach the gospel, and was a "chosen vessel" unto the Lord to carry the gospel, and thus "to bear" the divine "name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." See Acts 9: 15. Yet he implies, in the words chosen as a text for this sermon, that he was liable to be lost, and needed to be on his guard in order to avoid being "a castaway." What can this mean? The right answer to this question requires that we shall consider the difference between *official character* and *personal character*.

The Savior said of Saul of Tarsus while he was a praying believer, and before he had been washed from his sins, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." But all that our Savior then said of Saul referred to him in regard to the official character *as an apostle*, which the Lord intended he should have, and not to his personal character *as a Christian*. Christ appeared to him in order to make him a witness of his resurrection from the dead, so that he might be an apostle. This is evident from his own testimony to Saul when he appeared to him. He said, "But rise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee." See Acts 26: 16, 17. To this we may add Paul's own testimony in 1st Corinthians 9: 1. "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" In view of all this testimony we can understand that Paul was "a chosen vessel" in regard to his *official character as an apostle*. Because of the Lord's choice of him to be an apostle he wrote thus of himself in 1st Corinthians 9: 16, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

But Christ did not lay on Paul the necessity of living the life of a Christian so as to reach the Christian's home in glory. That pertained to his *personal character*, and was a matter for him to decide on for himself. His apostleship did not mean that he was chosen unto eter-

nal life so that he *could not be lost*. For he said, in the words of our text, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a *castaway*."

Because the difference between personal and official character, that we are now considering, was not understood by certain religious reformers they made the mistake of applying certain scriptures to *personal character* which belonged strictly to *official character*. As a result they taught that from before the foundation of the world God foreordained certain men and angels to be saved, and others to be lost, and that, too, without any foresight on the part of God of any good or bad works on the part of men and angels. This doctrine tended to confuse those who accepted it, and to make them indifferent in regard to studying the Bible, and trying to become Christians. They concluded that if they were foreordained to be saved the Lord would arrange for their salvation, but if they were foreordained to be lost they could not do anything toward saving themselves. As a result millions have been confused, confounded, lost. But this result might have been avoided if the mentioned reformers had only studied the Bible enough to know the difference between PERSONAL CHARACTER and OFFICIAL CHARACTER.

Returning to the subject which was intended to be the chief thought in this sermon, let us now consider Paul's example in personal discipline. He kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, in order that he might be personally saved. That which he did for his salvation, *we must do in order to be saved*. He could not have been saved without keeping his body under, and bringing it into subjection. *The same is*

true of us. Our bodies were intended to be SERVANTS, and not MASTERS. The same is true of all our appetites and passions. They are all divine gifts intended to accomplish good. God is the author of our bodies, as well as of our spirits. He knew how to arrange our bodies so as to adapt them to this world, even as he knew how to form our spirits so as to adapt them to the world beyond.

Through nature we are differently constituted—have different temperaments. But we all have a fair share of human nature. Some have more of it in one direction, while others have more of it in another. But the share, or degree, of human nature, which we all have is divinely intended for our good, and may be used to good account, if it is only kept under control, and rightly directed. For instance, let us consider that which is called “temper.” Many persons seem to regard a “quick temper” as a misfortune. And so it is if it is not controlled. But our tempers were intended to be servants, and not masters. Therefore the more temper we have the better we are gifted by nature for the battles of life, *if we will only control it.* The man that has but a feeble temper is not good for a soldier either on the battlefield of a carnal warfare, nor in life’s battles that will be thrust upon him in private. He is by nature so easily discouraged that he cannot be trusted in the affairs of life. Yet we must not suppose that we are justified in making a show of anger. Solomon said, “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” See Ecclesiastes 7: 9. Then in Proverbs 16: 32 we read, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

That which is true of the temper is true of the

tongue, of the appetite, of energy, of ambition, of the desire for gain, and of social qualities. These are all gifts of nature, and if properly controlled may be used for good. But if they are suffered to control those who have them they then become evils. The same is true of all our forces and faculties, and dispositions. They may be all used for good if they are kept under, and made to serve the mind. But if they gain the upper hand in the conflict for self control they all become evils. Paul had this in view when he declared that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway.

All the forces in the body are, in a certain sense, like the forces in nature. They are *good servants*, but *bad masters*. Fire is a good servant, but a bad master. Wind is a good servant, but a bad master. The same is true of water, electricity, heat and cold. These are all good servants, but bad masters. Paul was very plain on this subject when he wrote, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." See Romans 7: 18. But in thus writing Paul referred to the flesh when it had gained the mastery over the mind. The meaning of this we can understand when we consider the condition of the victims of strong drink. Some of them will vote for the abolition of the liquor traffic, yet will get drunk every chance they have. Those who are victims of the tobacco habit are somewhat of the same order. They will denounce the use of tobacco as a filthy and injurious habit, yet will continue to use it. Strong drink and tobacco are both good in their places, but they are terrible evils when they are suffered to gain the mastery of mankind.

Let us not, therefore, regard our bodies as evil in

themselves. They are divine arrangements, and were intended for the dwelling houses of our spirits while they remain here on earth. But the business of the spirit is to control the body and bring it into subjection. If the spirit does not control the body, then the body will control the spirit. In every human being that has come to the years of responsibility the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit are contending against each other. If the mind of the spirit—consisting of the reason and moral sentiments—*goes up*, then the mind of the flesh—consisting of the animal appetites and passions—*goes down*. On the other hand, if the mind of the flesh *goes up*, then the mind of the spirit *goes down*. That is to say, if the spirit of man gains control then the body is brought under; but if the body gains control, then the mind is brought under. The conflict between *the law of the mind*, and *the law in the members of the body*, is discussed by Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans. In that chapter he sets forth the base and condemned condition of all whose bodies gain control of their minds, and bring them into subjection to the flesh. But in the eighth chapter of Romans Paul discusses the deliverance from bondage to the flesh, and from condemnation, which those enjoy who are in Christ Jesus.

The Jewish law was intended to assist the spirit of man in gaining and holding control of the body. But that law was written on tables of stone, and on parchments. These could not win the hearts of the Jewish people very much. David said he loved the law of the Lord, and some others of the Jewish people might have said the same. But "the law," which Paul declared was "holy," and "the commandment," which he said was "holy and just and good," was not sufficient to en-

able the Jew to gain and hold control of his body. It proved to be weak because of the strength of the flesh. The flesh asserted itself so as to bring the spirit in subjection to its demands.

But the gospel is better than the Jewish law in several respects. In the first place it is offered to us in the person of Christ, and we are first invited to view him as the Babe of Bethlehem, then as the Child Jesus, next as the Man of Nazareth, then as the Man of Sorrows, and finally as the Son of God suffering in behalf of a sinful world. As the Babe of Bethlehem he touches the tenderest chord of our hearts, for we all love the helpless babe wherever found. But a babe born in poverty is an object of compassion, as well as of love. Then, when we think of the Babe of Bethlehem, born in poverty for our sakes, and in order that we might be rich, our hearts should be overwhelmed with gratitude as well as with love and compassion. Add to this the fact that shepherds of the Jews, and wise men from a far country, worshipped Him while he was a babe, also that all the angels of God were commanded to worship him, and then we are filled with reverence for him.

When we pass from the Babe of Bethlehem to the Child Jesus we do not leave our love, compassion, and gratitude. For the Child Jesus was obedient to his mother and foster-father, except when the time came that he needed to be about his heavenly Father's business. Besides, He was still a child of poverty, and, therefore, we follow him with compassion, love, and gratitude. Then, when we behold Him among the doctors, "hearing them and asking them questions," and astounding them with his "understanding and answers" (Luke 2: 42-48), we are filled with admiration

for him. As a result He has a very strong hold on our hearts, and we desire to see and hear more of him.

But we must pass over a period of eighteen years, and then we behold Jesus as the Man of Nazareth coming from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of John in the river Jordan. There we behold him as the Lamb of God "that taketh away the sin of the world," asking John the Baptist to baptize him that he might fulfill "all righteousness." We behold Him, after his baptism, coming up out of the water praying, and then we behold the heavens opened and the Spirit of God in bodily form like a dove, descending and lighting upon him, and we hear a voice from heaven declaring, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." By reason of all this our love, and compassion, and gratitude, toward Him are confirmed, and we begin to feel that our reverence for him is increased. As a result we feel like falling down before Him, and worshipping him.

Next we behold Him in the wilderness suffering hunger. We behold Him with the wild beasts and tempted of the devil. We behold Him quoting words from his Father's book, and, by the power of those words, confuting his tempter, and causing him to leave his presence. After that we see angels ministering to Him, and hear him beginning to preach "the gospel of the kingdom," and beginning to work miracles in behalf of the suffering ones of mankind that came to him. We even behold Him healing some that he never saw. As we thus consider Him, according to the records that are offered to us concerning him, we hear him say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Then our love, our compassion, our gratitude,

and our reverence for Him, are continued and intensified.

Next, as we hear His Sermon on the Mount, his speech to Nicodemus, his interview with the woman of Samaria, his private instruction to his disciples, his public controversies with the Jews, we are filled with admiration and adoration. Then, as we behold Him informing his disciples of his own death, and of the persecutions which he knew would be inflicted on them; as we behold him crowded and urged and slandered by the chief of the Jews who were his enemies; as we see him eating his last meal with his disciples before his death, and hear him telling them that one of their number would betray him; as we hear his prayer to his Father, behold his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, hear the prayer that he offered while in the midst of his agony—as we think of all this our love for him, our compassion for him, our gratitude toward him, our reverence, admiration, and adoration for him, are all further increased and intensified. Then, when we behold Him betrayed by one of his own company, and see him in the hands of his enemies, hear their false accusations against him, see one of them strike him, and another spit on his face, and yet do not hear him utter a word of complaint, we are filled with WONDER. As we hear the false accusations renewed, and hear His answers to questions before the chief priest, and before the Roman Governor, and notice his silence before a ruler named Herod, our wonder is increased. Finally, in addition to all our other feelings we are filled with ASTONISHMENT.

But the end is not yet. When all efforts to give evidence against Him failed to secure his condemnation, his enemies raised the clamor of a mob, and demanded

that he should be crucified. When they had gained that sentence we behold that He was scourged, or whipped, and then led to the place where he was to be put to death. There we behold them strip Him of his clothing, and nail him to an instrument of torture called a cross, and suspend him between the heavens and the earth to die there. But He was not left to die in peace. According to the records of His death we may, in mind, hear some of his enemies deriding him, and mocking him, even while he was in the agony of death. In the midst of all this we hear Him praying for his enemies, and saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We then hear Him complain to his Father saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Finally, we hear Him saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As we consider all this, and remember that it was *all done*, and *all endured*, in our behalf, and that we might learn to love and obey our Savior, then we feel overwhelmed, our hearts are won, and we are ready to bow to his requirements. Our spirits are ready to hear, to do, and be, all that He commands.

Now we are enabled to understand the chief difference between the gospel of Christ, and the Jewish law, in regard to its influence over the minds and hearts of mankind. The Jewish law was first offered to mankind from Mount Sinai in the midst of thunders and lightnings, the voice of the trumpet and earthquakes. The effect was to cause the people who were present to tremble, but not to love; to be filled with reverence for authority, but not with tender feelings. It was afterwards given on tables of stone and on parchments. In all these respects the gospel differs from the law. It is offered to us first of all in the person of Christ, and,

in such a record of innocence and poverty, humility and suffering, beauty and perfection, that our hearts are won. Then, because our hearts are won by the Savior, we are ready to obey him. We can, as a rule, cheerfully, obey those whom we love. This is true in regard to all earthward beings whom we love. Subjects who love their earthly rulers can cheerfully obey them; and soldiers who love their commanders can cheerfully obey them. The same is true of children toward parents, pupils toward teachers, and disciples toward their Savior. In proportion as we love the Savior we are prepared to obey him cheerfully. His life and sufferings and death, to save us from sin, are the greatest condemnations that sin has ever received. Yet by His life, sufferings, and death, he has given to us a doctrine that excels the Jewish law in controlling mankind because it *wins their hearts* in proportion as they consider it aright. Paul referred to this when he declared, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." See Romans 8: 3.

The gospel of Christ is, therefore, the sovereign remedy—the *specific*—the ALL-CURE, for our spiritual ailments. By obedience to it we are saved from the guilt of our sins, and, by remaining steadfast in it, we are saved from all weaknesses of our dispositions. By obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which is delivered to us in the gospel we are made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness. Then, by continuing to live in harmony with the gospel we have our fruit unto holiness, and shall have in the end everlasting life. See Romans 6: 17, 18, 22. This suggests the saying of David concerning God in Psalm

103: 3,—“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.” God forgives sins and heals the diseases of the soul, or spirit. Forgiveness is soon bestowed, so that the guilt of sin does not endanger the spirit. Yet the natural weaknesses of our dispositions, which we have inherited from our parents, who received similar weaknesses from their parents, are not soon overcome. Neither are the evil effects of our own sinful life, in which some of us continued a long time, soon overcome. Paul was aware of this, and, therefore wrote the church at Corinth, that he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection, lest that by any means after having preached to others he should be a castaway.

Perfect self-control, by reason of right convictions, may be safely said to be the beauty and glory of manhood and womanhood. Native dignity of person and regularity of features may seem to be the chief elements in the beauty of a human being. But such beauty is often turned to ugliness, if those who possess it are not capable of perfect self-control, even in trying circumstances. An angry countenance is not beautiful, and the violent gesticulating of an angry man is not dignified. But there is something beautiful, and dignified, in perfect self-control in the midst of trying circumstances. This is true from a physical viewpoint, while from a moral viewpoint perfect self-control, by reason of right convictions, is grand and glorious.

But the Apostle Paul did not resolve on perfect self-control in order to be beautiful nor dignified in this life, nor even grand and glorious before his fellow mortals. He had another end in view, and that end was his final salvation. Therefore he said, “I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Now we are prepared to consider the question of convictions. We may say that perfect self control should be maintained *at the point of right convictions*. This is true. If we secure and maintain such control by reason of pride, or stubbornness, we are unlovely characters, and, sooner or later, will show ourselves to be contemptible. But, the question arises, *How may the right convictions be produced and maintained?* This brings us to the foundation—the bed-rock—of all that pertains to strength of character. Mankind are, by nature, strong or weak in proportion as their natural gifts enable them to have strong convictions, or only weak convictions. Those who, by nature, are so gifted that they are highly capable of strong convictions, are, by nature, intended for *strong characters*. But the reverse is true of those whose natural gifts only enable them to have *weak convictions*. Yet by proper training the strong may become stronger, and learn to avoid stubbornness, while the weak may become, in a measure, strong. The Greek word translated by the word "temperance," in the New Testament, means *self-control*. Then the Bible from first to last recommends self-control, and condemns lack of self control. Finally, the church of the New Testament is the upholder of the Bible, for it is the pillar and ground of the truth, and, thus, is the support of the truth. Therefore, the New Testament church is the society which God has ordained to teach mankind in that beautiful and dignified, that grand and glorious accomplishment,—*perfect self-control*.

Now we are prepared to consider the self-discipline which all mankind, who have come to the years of un-

derstanding, should impose on themselves. Some of us, by nature, may be too highly gifted in the region of self-esteem, and are liable to have too much love of approbation. This may be spoken of as a "strong weakness"—so strong that those who have it, in a high degree, are seldom, or never, cured of it entirely. But the divine testimony is sufficient to produce in them such convictions as will cause them to feel their weakness, and littleness. By considering the divine attributes they will be led to think of God's approval so much that they will not be seriously affected by the approval or disapproval of mankind. All who, by nature, are disposed to think highly of themselves should specially study all the scriptures which declare God's greatness and power, majesty and might, grandeur and glory. By so doing they will be made to feel that they are not only small, but are utterly unworthy, except by reason of God's care for those who bear his divine image. Then the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all that he suffered in behalf of mankind, should be studied by all such with special care and constant devotion.

But there are those who, by nature, underestimate themselves. They are unduly modest, and seem disposed to think that they can never do much. All such should study the Bible aright, and study it till they become filled with it. Their convictions in regard to its value will become so strong that they will feel as Paul did when he wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me;" and again, "Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." See Philippians 4: 13; 2nd Timothy 2: 10. The Bible has the testimony in it which will bring the

self-conceited down to humility, and will bring those who, by nature, are too modest, up to the confidence which the gospel requires. The Apostle James intimates in this direction when he says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low." See James 1: 9, 10. *The gospel is the great leveler.* It is intended to bring the lofty ones DOWN, and to lift the lowly ones UP; to cause the stubborn ones to be REASONABLE, and the changeable to be STEADY; to cause the ignorant to become WISE, and the worldly-wise to acknowledge that they are IGNORANT. *But these changes must all be wrought at the point of conviction.* The Bible must be studied with such constancy and care that it can produce conviction—*strong conviction*—in the mind and heart. Then, by reason of conviction we all need to regulate ourselves, regardless of our likes or dislikes, preferences or non-preferences, inclinations or objections. Our bodies *must be brought under perfect self-control*, regardless of the self-denial, or self-abnegation, that may be required.

Paul had the proper conviction. He was, by nature, so gifted that he was capable of strong convictions. Besides, he was so gifted, by the Holy Spirit, that he knew sufficient of the divine will to produce strong convictions in him. When Christ appeared to him in a light above the brightness of the sun, and spoke to him, he became convinced that he had been persecuting the Son of God, and that was sufficient to settle his mind. In one of his letters he declared that when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him that he might preach him among the heathen he "conferred not with flesh and blood." See Galatians 1: 16. The record of his life shows that he did not confer with anything that will fail to rise the last great day.

Paul's example of personal discipline was intended for us to imitate. He exhorted the brethren at Corinth thus: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." See 1st Corinthians 11: 1. The Greek word here translated by the English word "followers" means "imitators, copyists." This being true we can understand that all Christians are required to imitate, or copy after, the Apostle Paul. In so doing we must keep our bodies under, and bring them into subjection in order that we may not be finally cast away.

But our self-training, or discipline, must be attended to with the utmost care. In order to overcome an evil habit we shall often need to watch ourselves every day, and sometimes every hour, even every minute, in order to gain the mastery of ourselves. Suppose, for instance, that we have been in the habit of talking too much. We may need to be on our guard hour by hour and minute by minute until we shall learn to be quiet. Suppose we have been in the habit of overstating and understating nearly everything that we say, for the sake of fun, or because of our conceit. Then we shall need to watch ourselves in nearly every sentence that we utter until we shall learn to be moderate in speech. When an extravagant remark has escaped our lips we shall need to trim it down, as an old Quaker did on a certain occasion. He said one day, after returning from the post-office near his home, that he believed he saw a hundred persons there. Then, after a moment's silence, he said, "I can say *fifty*, and tell no lie about it." Sometimes we shall need to trim down our speeches more than that Quaker did his speech just mentioned. Paul says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak the truth every man with his neighbor." See Ephesians 4: 25, and Colossians 3: 9.

But this is not all. Some persons are inclined to use profane and vulgar speech before they obey the gospel, and if they do not watch themselves with the utmost care they will do so after they obey it. Certain church members seem to think that it is lawful to use such speech when quoting some one else. But to do so is only "second-hand" swearing, or "second-hand" vulgarity, and should be avoided. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers." See Ephesians 4: 29, 5: 4. Then the Apostle James declares, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." See James 1: 26. In view of all this we can clearly understand that we must watch our own speech, and avoid everything that bears in the direction of vulgarity, profanity, or falsehood. We would better be the plainest people on earth in regard to speech than to be regarded as funny, or witty, and especially if our fun or wit is at the expense of purity and truth.

That which has been stated, in regard to speech, is true concerning the temper. In order for us to gain complete control of our tempers we may find it necessary to watch over them every day, every hour, and every minute, in many of the trying periods of life. But to control them for one hour will help us to control them for two hours, and to hold them under two hours will strengthen us to control them four hours. Then to control them one day will greatly assist us in our efforts to control them every day. As a result we shall, finally, have complete control of them at all times.

The best way to control the temper is to try to pray

when angry. By force of will we may turn our thoughts heavenward, and ask the Lord to have mercy on us. By so doing our angry feelings will be checked, and we shall soon be able to feel composed. Then we shall understand this saying of Paul, "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath." See Ephesians 4: 26. This means that we need to get rid of our angry feelings. The best way for us to do so is to pray unto the Lord to have mercy on us.

Now we are prepared to understand the best plan to end all trouble about church discipline. Let each disciple of Christ engage in self-discipline, and follow Paul's example when he brought his body under and kept it in subjection. As a result, we shall all deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this world. We shall keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and avoid even the appearance of evil. As a further result, we shall avoid the need of being disciplined by the church. The elders of a church do not need to discipline those who keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection. All professed Christians should do this, and thereby attain to the beauty and dignity, grandeur and glory of manhood and womanhood in the Lord. By so doing we may be a constant joy to ourselves, to the church with which we are connected, to our dear ones in the family relation, and to all with whom we associate. Besides, we shall be prepared for death and the judgment.

This brings us to the conclusion of this subject. We need to keep our bodies under, and bring them into subjection *in order to avoid final condemnation*. Paul needed to do so in order to avoid being a "castaway." As he was in danger of being a "castaway" if he did

not discipline himself even to perfect self control, the same is true of us. Much is said of schools and colleges to educate young persons, but the school in which all must educate themselves is the school of self-discipline so as to become able to control themselves. The human body is a good servant if it is kept under the mind, but it is a bad master if suffered to bring the mind under it. While the mind is in control reason rules, but when the body gains control then passion rules. The rule of reason is right, especially if reason is guided by the word of God. But the rule of passion is wrong, especially if passion is given its full sway.

A lawyer, of large experience, declared that three-fourths of the lawsuits that are brought into court would never be entered there if those who bring them would only sleep one night more before entering them. This implies that because some people do not control their tempers they are sometimes disposed to go into court. The same is true of divorce cases. An elderly man and his wife were disposed to quarrel. All at once they ceased to have any quarrels, and seemed to live in peace. Some one inquired of one of them about the change in their disposition toward each other. The answer was, "We have taken two *bears* into our home, *bear*, and *forbear*, and we don't quarrel any more." In other words, they decided to keep their bodies under and bring them into subjection, and, in so doing, they kept their tongues under control. As a result they did not quarrel any more, and their old age was likely to be peaceful and happy. Thus it has been with others, and thus it may be with all who will keep their bodies under, and will bring them into subjection, with all their members, and all their forces and powers.

The Bible offers to us the testimony which will pro-

duce the convictions which will enable us to attain and maintain that perfect self-control which is the beauty and dignity, grandeur and glory of manhood and womanhood in all departments and stages of our earthly pilgrimage. Therefore we should all study the Bible every day that we live in order that our spirits may become strong enough to bring our bodies under perfect control.

SERMON NO. VI

THE HIGHEST MOTIVE FOR DOING GOOD

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1st Corinthians 10: 31.

A CERTAIN lady was praised for doing good, and was spoken of as a very unselfish woman. In response she said, "I do not deserve such praise, for I began to do good through a selfish motive. When I came to the years of womanhood I was anxious to be praised, but I soon learned that I did not possess wealth, nor beauty, nor any other charm, by reason of which I would likely be praised by any one. Then I determined to win praise, and to accomplish this end I decided to devote myself to the welfare of others. Of course I have been much gratified by the fact that I have done something toward making others comfortable, and even happy, yet my first motive was to benefit myself, and that was a selfish motive. For this reason I don't think that I deserve to be spoken of as an unselfish woman."

A certain politician decided to seek a certain office—the highest that his county could give. He had saved a few thousand dollars, and decided to use them in doing good, and thereby make friends who would advocate his election. With this end in view he subscribed for all the papers published in his county, and read them, chiefly, to learn of the misfortunes which the poor people of his county would suffer. When he saw an ac-

count of a poor man losing a horse, or a cow, or a child, or meeting with any other misfortune, he would send that man a check for five, or ten, dollars. By so doing he made for himself friends, in many places, who praised him, and were diligent to use their influence for him, when he was announced as a candidate for office.

These two instances, which we have just considered, bring before us one of the lowest motives which move any part of mankind to do anything that is good. Those who are moved to do good by that motive are selfish. They do good for the purpose of benefiting themselves, or to make for themselves a good name, or a great name. Many of the rich, whose names are printed and praised, are moved by that motive. They will crush the poor in private to make themselves rich, and then will publicly give to the poor in order to make a NAME for themselves. Their secret deeds of kindness are very few and small. But if they can make a NAME for themselves in public, and cause people to praise them as charitable, and benevolent, they are ready to be kind, and, sometimes, are ready on a large scale. The chief end they have in view is their own advantage. Their conduct suggests that of the hypocrites mentioned by the Savior in the sixth chapter of Matthew's account of the gospel. They forget the warning that the Savior gave to his disciples concerning those hypocrites, and the statement that they did deeds of kindness in order that they might "have glory of men," and that they secured "their reward." Besides, they likewise forget the Savior's teaching about the advantage of doing alms in secret. They are moved by selfish motives, and get their reward in this world. Their conduct is only excelled by the meanness of those who

preached Christ in order to "add affliction" to Paul's bonds. See Philippians 1: 16. Those who do good with such motives may benefit themselves and others for this world, but they damage themselves for the world to come.

But many persons do good chiefly to benefit others. They delight to see others made happy, and strive to accomplish those ends which will cause others to become happy. This is the motive which we may suppose is chief in all the religious denominations of the so-called Christendom. From the beginning of Roman Catholicism to the end of the so-called Salvation Army we may charitably suppose that the chief motive is to do good to others. Of course, the conduct of all sectarian bodies often suggests the idea that they are chiefly concerned about building up their own sects or parties. This idea is suggested by the jealous manner in which they regard their party names, and creeds, also by their unwillingness to learn any truth which does not come to them through their party leaders. Many of them seem ready to accept all that those leaders may say to them, and to reject all that any one else may offer to them. Besides, they, generally, become offended if their party names, or creeds, are measured by the Bible, in their hearing. Those who show such a disposition, as that just referred to, certainly show that they are more zealous for their party, or society, or church, than they are to do good.

But those who chiefly desire to benefit mankind by doing good are not moved by the highest motive that is divinely required of Christians. As a result, they are constantly disposed to change their methods of doing good. Their motive is in harmony with the "golden rule," as Matthew 7: 12 is generally called. "All

things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This doctrine of our Savior commands those to whom it is addressed to do good. The standard by which the good they are required to do is to be decided is found in this doctrine. That standard is our own idea of that which we wish others to do to us. This doctrine is divine, and though given by the Savior, to his disciples, in course of his personal ministry, yet it is wholesome for all mankind, and in all ages. The Savior said of this doctrine, "For this is the law and the prophets." That is to say, this doctrine has all in it which the Jewish law, and the teachings of the Jewish Prophets, set forth in regard to man doing good to his fellow mortals. The same is true of this doctrine in regard to the gospel. All the manward teaching found in the entire gospel is summed up in the saying, "All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

In view of all this we may safely say, that the desire to do good to others is a *high motive*—one that is divinely commanded, and, therefore, divinely approved. For this reason we should not speak against that motive, nor, in any respect, try to lead persons away from it. That motive should have a place, and a *high place*, in the confidence of all Christians, and of all others. Yet we should not regard that motive as *the highest* which should move us in doing good. Those who regard the high motive that we are now considering as *the highest* that should move us in doing good, make a mistake that is very serious, and is liable to be full of evil results.

The highest motive by which mankind can be moved to do good is found in the words of the text chosen for this sermon. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or

whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is the highest motive which can move mankind to do good because it is of divine origin, and is regulated by reverence for God. The words of this text are found in the midst of instruction offered to Christians in regard to their weak brethren. Therefore it specially refers to doing good to weak Christians, and is so unmodified that it covers the domain of doing good to all others. The expression "whatsoever ye do" certainly covers the doing of good in every direction, of every kind, and to all mankind.

But why is the mistake of adopting a high motive for the highest liable to be followed by evil results? The first reason is that all changing of God's order is *WRONG*. He knows what is best, and has arranged his teaching in the best order. The Jewish people did not always believe this, and, in some instances, tampered with the divine order. As a result they were condemned in these words: "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He hath no understanding?" According to such condemnation of the Jews, when they did not observe the divine order, we can readily see that the Lord does not now look with pleasure on those who disregard his order.

But this is not all. God is the one who has adapted light to the eye and the eye to light, hunger to food and food to hunger, water to thirst and thirst to water, with all the other adaptations in nature. These adaptations cannot be reversed, nor, in any respect, changed without disregard of divine wisdom and goodness, likewise a hindrance of those results which divine

wisdom and goodness have in view. Some one has declared,

“Whatever link of nature’s chain you strike,
Tenth or ten-thousandth breaks the chain alike.”

The same is true of all else that has been divinely arranged. When man interferes with the order that has been divinely arranged he seems to think that he knows more than his Maker about the divine arrangement, or that he thinks a human arrangement is better than the divine. But even if he does not know what the divine arrangement is, yet his ignorance will not prevent evil results from following the order that he adopts. For instance, God has ordained that food shall satisfy hunger, and that water shall quench thirst. Therefore, this order cannot be reversed, nor in any measure changed, without evil results. Hunger cannot be satisfied with water, nor can thirst be quenched with food. Moreover, God has ordained that rice shall grow in earth flooded with water, and that wheat shall grow in earth that is above water. This arrangement cannot be reversed without failure. Wheat cannot grow in earth that is flooded with water, nor can rice be raised on dry ground. These two illustrations might be multiplied many times, if necessary; but the common mind does not need anything more, on this question, in order to understand that God’s arrangement is the best, and is the only one that will succeed in nature.

Why, then, will man—irreverent man—suppose that he can succeed in religion without observing the divine order, especially when the Lord has been careful to reveal that order? For instance, the divine order of obedience for the alien sinner is faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. But certain religious people re-

verse that order and teach baptism, repentance, confession, and faith. Yes, they impose something they call baptism on an infant. When that infant grows up and becomes a sinner they command him to repent. When he shows signs of repentance they ask him for a confession of faith in Christ. When his confession is made he is told that his faith is only "historical," and that he needs to pray for saving faith, and that when the Lord will give to him saving faith then he will be saved. But such teaching reverses the divine order, and it results in religious confusion rather than in religious salvation.

The same is true when the motive for doing good, mentioned in Matthew 7: 12, is adopted in the place of the motive mentioned in 1st Corinthians 10: 31. In other words, when the desire to do good in order to benefit mankind, even as we would wish for them to benefit us — when this desire is adopted as *chief*, instead of the desire to glorify God, then a disregard of the divine order is shown. A *high* motive is exalted to the position of the HIGHEST, and evil will certainly result. The first reason that evil will certainly result is because those guilty of changing the position of a certain high motive for doing good fall under divine condemnation. The second reason that evil results from such changing is because those guilty of it are in a wavering condition of mind. They are constantly liable to change in order to do good. Doing good is the supreme end which they have in mind, and when one method of procedure will not accomplish that end they will adopt another which they think will succeed. They are DETERMINED to make a SUCCESS in doing good, and instead of striving for solid success they often strive for a mere show of success regardless of the question of

solidity, or genuineness. A sham success, they seem to think, is better, if it is BIG, than a solid success that is SMALL.

Now we can understand the reason for the different, the doubtful, and the condemnable methods of all sectarians, from the Roman Catholic church down to the so-called Salvation Army. All sectarian churches have decided that their chief business is to do good, if we may give them credit for being sincere in the highest profession that they make. Therefore, if the scriptural method of doing good does not seem to succeed when they try it, they will soon turn to some human method. They will tax their brains to the utmost in order to devise some new scheme, or plan, to accomplish good. Roman Catholics have taken the lead in that direction, and sectarian Protestants have tried to imitate them. Rome is charged with saying, "The end justifies the means," and all sectarian Protestants seem to have adopted that saying. Therefore, in the doctrines of Rome and her imitators, we find modifications of divine doctrine, perversions of that doctrine, misplacements of certain items of that doctrine, and many appeals to the world in order to raise money for religious purposes. "Let us do evil that good may come"—this seems to have been the doctrine adopted by all churches that are not mentioned in the Bible. Paul denounced that doctrine, as a slander when charged against him, and declared that the condemnation of those, who were guilty of making such a charge, was just. See Romans 3: 8.

But it is not a slander when made against Rome and her imitators in their mad rivalry, and unscriptural zeal for a show of success. "The end justifies the means," and, "Let us do evil that good may come"—

these sayings seem to be their secret grips, their watch-words, their countersigns. They will not inscribe those sayings on their banners, so that they may be known and read of all men, yet their conduct shows that they are moved chiefly by them. And, why? The most charitable explanation is that they have misplaced a certain divinely ordained motive. They have set a *high motive* in the place of *the highest*. They think more about *doing good* than they think of *glorifying God*. As a result they seem to be ready for anything, except an exposure of their mistake, and cherishing a friendly feeling for those who expose it. They illustrate Proverbs 15: 10. "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way, and he that hateth reproof shall die."

Now we are prepared to consider the highest motive, that God has ordained, for doing good. It is set forth in these words: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." In harmony with this we read in 1st Corinthians 6: 20 that Paul said to Christians, "For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's." These sayings certainly show that God desires to be glorified in mankind. When we learn the full bearings of these sayings, then we can read the Bible and pray, labor and wait, in the full assurance of faith. Then we are not tempted to rival others in reading many chapters of the Bible each day, for we read for our own spiritual good in order that God may be glorified in our bodies and in our spirits which are his. We desire to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in order to glorify God. We desire, likewise, to grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ, and we desire this in order that we may glorify God. We bear with the weaknesses of those

who are weak in the faith, and we apologize for their mistakes, because we wish to glorify God. We will even refrain from eating that which will offend a weak brother, or sister, because we remember the command, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

When we pray to God we desire to pray so as to glorify him, if we are moved by the highest motive that God has ordained. If we pray in secret we wish to be humble and earnest and devoted, because we are assured that God desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. If we pray in public we wish to edify those who hear us, but above all else we desire to glorify God. The same is true of all our other acts of devotion, including our singing. Then we do not sing to be heard of others, and, especially, do we not wish to be admired of them. But we try to sing with the spirit, and with the understanding, in order that we may edify others, and thereby glorify God. In so doing we will not allow ourselves to think that the edification of others is the chief end in view, for we will not forget the command, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

With this end in view we are not tempted to make a bid for popularity. As a result, we do not try to read, nor sing, preach, nor pray, in a popular style. We are not tempted to modify truth, nor to overlook error, nor to strain, nor modify, any truth that we set forth, in order to be popular. We consider the glory of God more than we do the praise of men, and we are not tempted to waver from that which will glorify God in order to please men. Our thoughts are Godward rather than manward, and the glory of God we consider so much that we are not tempted to seek approval of men.

When we look at a big meeting house we are disposed to inquire whether it was built for God's glory, or for the admiration of mankind, and we value it accordingly. When we hear of large congregations, and of eloquent sermons, we wonder what their chief purpose is, and whether they think more of the glory of God than of the praise of men. With the same disposition we view reports of great success in protracted meetings, and all reports of large sums of money that are given for religious, or other, purposes. What is the end in view? Paul commands, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," and this command should be always remembered by all Christians and should not be forgotten by any others.

Farmers who are Christians should try to manage their farms to the glory of God. They should plow, and sow, and reap, to God's honor and glory. With the same disposition they should raise stock, and handle stock. What is true of farmers is true of all other business men who are Christians. The merchant, the mechanic, the machinist, the salesman of the merchant's goods, and even the miner, and the common laborer, together with the seamstress, the housekeeper, the nurse—all these, and all others, should ever remember the doctrine, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That saying of a certain servant maid (Genesis 16: 31), who had run away from her mistress—"Thou, God, seest me"—should be remembered by all, and will be remembered by all who endeavor to glorify God in their bodies, and in their spirits which are his.

We should all remember the sayings of David in the 139th division of the Book of Psalms. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my

downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee." Thus declared David in regard to God's all-seeing eye, and all-knowing mind. And, in view of such declarations we can readily understand that God is worthy of all the glory that mankind can render to him. That same David said in Psalm 19: 1, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." To this the Lord added by David in Psalm 50: 23, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

Who can look abroad upon the beauty and grandeur of the material world without being impressed that God should be glorified by all his intelligent creatures? The sun, the moon, and the stars are glorious in themselves, and certainly the One who created them, and appointed their courses in the heavens, deserves to be glorified. Then the blue canopy of the heavens, in its calm mysterious constancy, certainly shows that God

should be glorified by all intelligent beings. He is the One of whom Job declared, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty space and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26: 7), and He is the one who declared through Moses, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me." See Deuteronomy 32: 33-41.

And is not such a God worthy of being glorified by us? To ask this question is to answer it. Our highest and most constant aim in life should be to glorify God. He has, indeed, glorified us by giving to us his own divine image, and by showing his love for us in giving his only Son to live, and suffer, and bleed and die for us. The Son glorified his Father on the earth, and has left us to conclude that he did so by finishing the work which the Father had given him to do. Notice the words that he used: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." See John 17: 4. This implies that we may glorify God by doing and finishing the work that he has given us to do.

The preacher of Christ, who labors for the glory of God more than to accomplish any other end, does not feel discouraged if he has a small audience, nor if he does not see any special results from his labors at certain times and places. He does not aim to make a show of success, but tries so to read and pray, preach and exhort, that his labors may be to God's glory. As a result, he keeps his thoughts heavenward rather than

earthward, and is not discouraged by unfavorable appearances. He does not speak in complaining terms to those who are present because those who are absent are not disposed to hear him preach. Besides, in the social circle he tries to be dignified and modest, sober-minded and courteous, instructive and patient, because he desires to glorify God. He does not think that he can glorify God by being the most jocular person in every social circle that he enters, nor will he try to equal every wag that he may meet. On the contrary, he will keep himself clear of everything of that kind. If he ventures to illustrate a truth by an amusing incident he will only use one that is chaste, and he will not try to make amusement the order of the occasion. He will always avoid acting the part of frivolity. In other words, he will not forget Paul's command, "Let all things be done unto edifying." (1st Corinthians 14: 26.) As soon as a conversation does not edify he will try to change it to that which tends to edification. If he cannot do so he will withdraw from the circle that conducts it.

Now we are prepared to consider Paul's command in Ephesians 3: 21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Here we learn that God desires to be glorified in the church, and this means in the church when assembled, as well as in the individual members when in their homes, or when scattered in the social circle, or in the domain of earthly callings. Therefore, all public meetings of the church should be conducted so as to glorify God by Christ Jesus. With this end in view the songs selected should be those with which the congregation is familiar. In the meeting house, when Christians have assembled for worship, is not a

good time to practice on new songs. All practicing on such songs should be done at another time. We cannot occupy our thought, and, perhaps, strain our eyes and brains, to sing a song aright, and, at the same time, use it in a worshipful frame of mind. The words of the song we sing should be connecting links between our souls and the throne of God's grace. The tune we sing should be so familiar that, when we use it in worship, we can give our attention entirely to the words we use in singing. Besides we should sing them with distinct utterance, and not in a slurring manner. The same should be true in regard to all other public speech including prayer, praise, thanksgiving and adoration. We cannot glorify God by such rapid utterance, or such mumbling utterance, that others cannot understand us. Paul referred to that which implies this much when he said, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." See 1st Corinthians 14: 15-17.

In view of all this we are further prepared to consider the importance of distinct, and heartfelt, singing. We need to sing distinctly so as to edify those who cannot read because of defective eyesight, or, for any other reason, do not look at the words that are used in singing. When we benefit them by enabling them to understand the sentiment that we sing, then we glorify God, for he desires his truth to be made known in song, as well as by other speech. See Colossians 3: 16. If we fail to edify others by our singing, our song service

is a partial failure. Then if we also fail to think of the sentiment that we sing, and do not allow it to turn our thoughts heavenward, our singing is a total failure, though it may entertain those hearing it. For if it fails to edify those who hear it, and fails to make those engaged in it better in spirit, it is a dead failure, and thus is only a religious sham. Christians should keep clear of everything of that kind.

But here is another scripture which has a direct bearing on this subject, and should be considered in the conclusion of this discourse. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God, in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever Amen." See 1st Peter 4: 11. Here we may learn that God is glorified, when mankind speak as the oracles of God speak. We may even learn that to glorify God in speaking on the subject of religion mankind must speak as the oracles of God. That is to say, when they pretend to set forth divine doctrine they can only glorify God, in so doing, when they speak as the oracles of God. We may talk about the divine doctrine in words and sentences of our own choosing, but such words and sentences we should not urge as the standard by which mankind should measure themselves. On the contrary, we should always urge that the exact statements or declarations of the oracles of God should be always regarded as the standard of measuring.

In view of all that has just been stated we can understand that we should not speak of the New Testament church, nor of its members, by any names except those that are set forth in the oracles of God. The same is true of the family and of the members of the

family. Besides, every item of doctrine, mentioned in the entire Bible, should be spoken of in the exact words of the divine oracles. Therefore we should not speak of seven kinds of faith, nor of three modes of baptism, any more than we should speak of seven gospels, or of three spirits. The faith that saves is produced by divine testimony, and must be sufficient to lead those who have it to obey the Savior. Then there is but one gospel, even as there is but one Lord, and one baptism. "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism." This is the divine doctrine in Ephesians 4: 5. In view of this we should not speak of three modes of baptism, but should simply say "one baptism" even as the oracles of God declare. Neither should we speak of "the design of baptism," and try to make the expression, "design of baptism," a standard by which to measure ourselves or others. On the contrary, we should simply speak of baptism, and of all other items of divine doctrine, in the exact words of "the oracles of God," or the divine teaching, as given in the Bible, especially in the New Covenant scriptures. By so doing we shall glorify God through Christ Jesus.

Here we may pause in the consideration of this question feeling assured that we have learned something of the highest motive, or feeling, with which mankind can be moved in doing good. While this feeling prompts us we shall not go far astray, for we shall always speak as the oracles of God when we pretend to set forth divine doctrine, and we shall always strive to be, and do, and say, what the Lord requires.

SERMON NO. VII

WHAT USE SHOULD WE MAKE OF THE BIBLE?

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matthew 4: 4.

THESE words of our Savior show that man is something more than an animal. All the animals that are lower than mankind can live by material food alone, if we add such quantity of water and air as may be necessary for them. When satisfied with food and drink the lower orders of animals can be comfortable if they are in good health. Then, except as their energy may impel them to move, or their desire for the company of others of their kind may cause them to be restless, they can, generally, be quiet. Earthward comforts are sufficient for them. This is true of the horse-kind, the sheep-kind, the swine-kind, the fowl-kind, and, as far as we know, it is true of the fish-kind. We do not see any evidence in any of the lower orders of creation that they are troubled about whence they came, what they are, nor whither they are going.

But we find a very different disposition in mankind. They first seek earthward necessities, then earthward comforts, and, after these are supplied, many of them will seek earthward luxuries. But all these combined do not satisfy many of mankind. In proportion as their thoughts are not pressingly occupied in regard to earthward necessities, comforts, and luxuries, they

think about whence they came, what they are, and whither they are tending. At a very early age little children are filled with wonder. They wonder in regard to the world which they see about them, the sun, the moon, and the stars, which they see above them, and what lies beyond them. They wonder, likewise, concerning themselves—whence they came and how they made their entrance into this world. Then, when they look upon a lifeless body, especially of one they knew, and see that body laid in the grave, their wonder is increased. As age advances the understanding of children, their wonder is intensified, until the years of manhood and womanhood are reached. Nor does wonder then cease, but the inquiring mind asks,

“What am I, whence produced, and for what end?
 Whence drew I being, to what period tend?
 Am I th’ abandon’d orphan of blind chance,
 Dropp’d by wild atoms in disordered dance?
 Or, from an endless chain of causes wrought,
 And of unthinking substance, born with thought.
 Am I but what I seem, mere flesh and blood,
 A branching channel with a mazy flood?
 The purple stream that through my vessels glides,
 Dull and unconscious flows, like common tides,
 The pipes, through which the circling juices stray,
 Are not that thinking I, no more than they:
 This frame, compacted with transcendent skill,
 Of moving joints obedient to my will;
 Nursed from the fruitful glebe, like yonder tree,
 Waxes and wastes,—I call it mine, not me.
 New matter still the mould’ring mass sustains;
 The mansion chang’d, the tenant still remains;
 And, from the fleeting stream, repair’d by food,
 Distinct, as is the swimmer from the flood.”

Thus man may, of his own accord, by the free use of his thinking powers, reach the conclusion that he is something more than a well-mixed body. He is conscious of a being within a being, of a power within a

power, of a mind within a body, even of a mind that can control his body. He knows that these two beings are distinct from each other. From this knowledge he does not vary, except when trying to excuse himself from responsibility for his evil deeds. He acts according to it in all his efforts to hold others responsible for their deeds, but when he has done wrong he often acts the coward and tries to blame some one else for his wrong. Thus did Adam and Eve when God questioned them concerning their first sin. Adam said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." See Genesis 3: 12, 13. On this principle the sinning sons and daughters of our first parents have been acting when they have done wrong so as to make cowards of them. But on all other occasions they know and acknowledge that they are able to control their bodies by the right use of their minds.

An ancient philosopher is said to have had this kind of an interview with one of his friends, "Is he that uses a thing, and the thing that he uses one and the same, or are they different?" His friend answered, "They seem to be different." "When a musician uses an instrument of music, is he the same as the instrument, or is he different from it?" "He is certainly different from it." "We are agreed then that he who uses a thing, and the thing he uses, are different, are we not?" "Yes, they are different." "But the musician makes use of his hands, and sometimes of his mouth, in playing an instrument—does he not?" "Yes, he does." "But we have agreed that he who uses a thing and the thing he uses are different—have we not?" "True, we have thus agreed." "But does not a man

use his hands, and his feet, and his entire body?" "Yes " "But as we have agreed that he that uses a thing, and the thing that he uses are different, what is it in man that uses his entire body, or any part of it as he pleases?" "I cannot tell." "Is it not the mind?" "Yes, the mind alone."

By the account just given of the mentioned interview we can understand how man can reach the conclusion, even without the Bible, that he is something more than a well-mixed body, and that the most important part of his being is the mind which can control the body. Then by the right use of his mind man can understand why he cannot be satisfied with earthward necessities, nor comforts, nor even with luxuries. But the Bible informs us that the mind of man is his spirit, and it declares that God is the one who "formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12: 1), and that he is "the father of spirits." (Hebrews 12: 9.)

But has not God given spirits to beast-kind as well as to mankind? Yes, and, in Ecclesiastes 3: 21, we may learn of the difference between them. Solomon there inquires, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" When God created the beast-kind he commanded the earth to bring them forth, but he did not breathe into their nostrils the breath of life. Therefore, he did not give them of his own breath, which came down from heaven. But all that he gave to them came up from the earth. This indicates the reason that, at the death of the beast, his spirit goes "downward to the earth." But this is not true of mankind. When God made man he gave to him his own image, and he did more. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and thus gave to him the

breath of God. Therefore, when man's body dies his spirit "goeth upward." Then, in Ecclesiastes 12: 7, we are informed that it goeth "unto God who gave it." Add to this the statement that God "formeth the spirit of man within him," and the evidence is complete on this subject.

Now we can understand why all the beast-kind can be satisfied with earthward comforts, while mankind cannot be thus satisfied. All that pertains to the beast-kind came up from the earth, and can be satisfied with that which comes up from the earth. The same is true of mankind in regard to the body, but not in regard to the mind, or spirit. The body is satisfied with the fruits of the earth, and with water that comes out of the earth, and with air that is near the earth. But this is not true of the spirit of man. It did not come up from the earth, but came down from God. Therefore earthly food will not satisfy it. On the contrary, as soon as the spirit has arranged for the comforts of the body it is generally disposed to inquire whence it came, what it is, and whither it is going.

The Bible is the only book that answers these questions in a plain and satisfactory manner. In it we are informed that the spirit of man is of the breath of God, and that, by reason of his spirit, man is responsible to God, and will finally be saved forever in both body and spirit, or will be lost forever in both body and spirit. If man will so live in this world that he will be saved forever, he will live forever in joy and peace, in comfort and consolation. But if he will so live in this world that he will be lost forever, then he will die forever, or die a death that will never end. See Mark 9: 43-48.

In view of all this we should all inquire, *How can*

man so live in this world that he will live forever after he will leave this world? The answer to this question is found in the words of our Savior when he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Because man is made up of a spirit that came down from God, as well as of a body that came up from the earth, he must be fed by spiritual food that came down from God, as well as with physical food that comes up from the earth. His body, as previously stated, can be satisfied with food and drink that came from the earth, and with air that is near the earth, but this is not true of his spirit. Neither can his spirit be satisfied with anything that is of lower origin than itself. This is the reason that neither fiction, nor any other kind of human literature can satisfy the mind, or spirit, of mankind. Books that have been produced by uninspired men do not meet all the spiritual needs of mankind. They may edify and entertain from an educational viewpoint, but they cannot satisfy the needs of man's moral nature. Men and women must be much perverted and demoralized if they can be, morally and religiously, satisfied with a human production in the form of a man made doctrine. This is specially true when they come to the hour of death, if they then have the right use of their brains. *What am I, and whither am I going?* This is the question that then becomes chief in the minds of all those who can think aright.

This disposition in man can only be accounted for by reason of the fact that he has a mind — a spirit — a soul, which is not earthborn. Because it is not earthborn it cannot be satisfied with earthly products. This is the reason that pleasurable enjoyments cannot satisfy the mind. Men and women, who have been permit-

ted to gratify themselves in earthward enjoyments to the utmost, have all borne the same kind of testimony. Here is the testimony of Solomon, who excelled all other men in earthward wisdom:

"I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven. This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." See Ecclesiastes 1: 12-14. Then, in Ecclesiastes 2: 1-11, he expressed himself thus: "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards; and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments and that of all sorts. So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not

from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." To this testimony Solomon added in the seventeenth verse of that same chapter: "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

In view of such testimony from the wisest monarch of Israel, what may we say of pleasurable enjoyments, of all kinds? We may say this: *They cannot satisfy those who are capable of thinking aright.* Low-graded specimens of humanity may feel satisfied with such enjoyments, but those who are able to think, in a reasonable degree, will, finally, regard them as vanity and vexation of spirit. This is not true of the lower orders of creation. Earthward enjoyments satisfy them, and the more they have of them the better they are satisfied. But man is not so made up. He grows weary of the best that earth can offer, and longs for something better—something higher—something beyond. This brings us back to the words of the text which declares, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

A story is told of a young woman whose parents had died, and left her rich in the things of this world. She decided that she would seek happiness in pleasurable enjoyment, and with that end in view she began to travel. She went around the world, and visited every country in which she thought her eyes could be gratified. She went to theatres and operas. She saw the

best players and heard the best singers, with all other kinds of music. She gratified her eyes, and ears, and taste, to the utmost, and yet was not satisfied. Finally, she was one day leaning over the rail of a vessel, looking at the blue waters of the great deep. Thinking of her vain efforts to find happiness in pleasurable enjoyment she said, as if speaking to herself, "I have sought happiness, but I have failed to find it: I have gone around the world and I have seen and heard much, but I am not happy, and now I would be glad if I could only find peace." Then she heard a solemn voice behind her say, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." She turned herself, and saw an elderly man standing near her. He had heard her speech, and had given the right answer. She supposed he had made a quotation from a favorite author, and inquired of him whence he had taken it. He informed her that he had quoted words of the God of the universe as recorded in Isaiah 48: 18. She thanked him, and inquired for a Bible. She read the quoted scripture for herself, and saw that she had mistaken pleasurable enjoyment for happiness. As the story stated she was thereby led to read her Bible in order to learn what true happiness is, and to find the way of life everlasting. In it she may have learned that, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

This saying of our Savior was a quotation from his Father's volume. It is first recorded in Deuteronomy 8: 3. Moses said to the Israelites concerning God, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee

know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

When the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt they were not prepared to enter the land of Canaan. They had been in bondage about four hundred years, and they were not fit to possess the land promised to their fathers. They showed their unfitness when they feared their enemies, and thought to turn back to Egypt, the land of their bondage. See Numbers 13th and 14th chapters. Therefore, God led them about in the wilderness through a period of forty years. Then he said to them, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Here is a lesson which we should all learn, *and never forget*. When the people of fleshly Israel first came from bondage they had not learned that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." Nor would they have learned it of themselves. Therefore God put them on trial in the wilderness, through a period of about forty years, and suffered them to hunger and thirst, and endure many trials, in order that they might learn their dependence on God.

The same is true of spiritual Israel, and of all others who live in the Gospel Age. We do not know by nature,

nor by reason, nor by earthward education, nor by experience, that man doth not live by earthward supplies of any kind, nor by all kinds of such supplies. Therefore, he needs to be put on trial—put under pressure—and severely tested. This is necessary, in most instances, in order to humble him, and to make him feel the need of calling on God; the need of studying his word, in order that he may learn the divine will. In many instances God finds it necessary to humble man to the utmost, in order that he may be made to feel his need of divine help, so as to cause him to read the divine word.

This enables us to understand the reason that many good persons are required to suffer much. "For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." See Hebrews 12: 6. Whatever we may be by nature, yet we are not wise enough nor good enough, by nature, to understand our relations to God, and our dependence on him. Therefore, we need to be placed on trial in order that we may learn that relation and dependence. The trials of life may be very severe, yet the divine Father knows what is best. He has an important end in view which cannot be otherwise accomplished. Here is the divine doctrine on this subject: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby." See Hebrews 12: 11.

Now we are prepared to understand the use we should make of the Bible. As previously stated God does not put mankind on trial, nor suffer them to be afflicted, except to accomplish an end which cannot be accomplished otherwise. Jeremiah, that prince among ancient sufferers, wrote thus of God: "But though he

cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies: for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." See Lamentations 3: 32, 33. This was written in view of the sufferings which God had commenced to inflict on the Jews in captivity among the Babylonians, in order to purge them from their sins. Looking forward to the good results of that captivity God said to the Israelite, "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." See Isaiah 48: 10.

Turning now to the New Testament we read the following from the Apostle Paul: "And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." See 2nd Corinthians 12: 7. Here we learn that God has sometimes afflicted one of his people, or suffered him to be afflicted, before he had done wrong, but in order to prevent him from doing wrong. That which God has done he may find it necessary to do again, and to do even unto us. He may see in us a disposition that will cause us to do wrong, in certain circumstances, if we are not put under special trial, or, in some way, are afflicted. Then, as certainly as that we are numbered with his people, his care for us will cause him to expose us to some trial, or affliction, by which we shall be humbled, and taught to know that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Now we have a clearer view than before of the subject under consideration. We should feed our souls, or spirits, on the Bible every day, and endeavor to live thereby. We should try to study the Bible every day,

and live in perfect harmony with its teachings, so that we shall not need to be afflicted in order to become humble enough to study it. God's ancient people might have avoided much, if not all, of their sufferings, by keeping in mind all of the divine words, and by doing them faithfully. The same may be true of us. God "doth not afflict willingly," but he afflicts for our good. Then in regard to all affliction he is considerate. Through the Apostle Paul we are informed, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." See 1st Corinthians 10: 13.

We have, quite generally, learned the needs of our bodies. We think that they need three meals a day in order to keep them in their best condition. We think, likewise, that they need fresh air and wholesome exercise. If some one would suggest to us that we should give to them only one meal a week, or even two a week, we would regard the suggestion with contempt. If some one would say to us that one meal a day would be sufficient we would not receive it kindly. We are satisfied that we need two meals a day, at least, and we think that three, each day, are better than two. Occasionally we think that a fourth meal will be all right if the work of the day has been long continued, or has been more oppressive than usual. And this is all right. Our bodies need regular meals, and not too much food at a meal, in order to be kept in their best condition.

The same is true of our souls. The spirit of man needs to be fed each day, and several times each day. If we cannot find time to read a part of God's word

each day we should repeat a part of that which we have learned, and meditate on it. This will prepare us to approach God in prayer. In order to live the life of a Christian—the life that is “hid with Christ in God”—we need to be CLOSE-COMMUNIONISTS. That is to say, we need to hold close communion with God and Christ every day. But this kind of communion cannot be held if we do not feed our souls daily on the word of God.

“Man is what he eats.” This is an old saying, and it is as true of man spiritually as it is of him physically. Man’s body is made up of that which he eats, or receives into his system by eating, drinking, and breathing. The same is true of him educationally, socially, politically, morally and spiritually. In view of this we do not wish our bodies to be imposed on, nor poisoned, with impure foods. But we are not, generally, so careful about food for our souls. Though, as a rule, we do not take the best care of our bodies, yet we care for them better than we do for our souls. We wash our hands and faces several times each day, and pay some attention to the hairs of our heads. As a rule, we are much more concerned about the appearance of our bodies before mankind than we are about the appearance of our souls before God. If we go into a picture gallery and have a photograph taken of our facial expression we may be so pleased with it that we will order an extra dozen photos made to hand around among our friends. But suppose we could have a picture taken of our souls, especially if we have not fed them well on the word of God. We certainly would not wish the extra dozen of such pictures made. But what avails a well-kept, well-nourished body, if our souls are in a starving condition?

We hail with delight "pure food laws" that will rule out impure foods for the body that men may be disposed to place on the market. We do not wish our bodies to be poisoned by impure foods, nor do we like to be cheated by mixed foods, nor adulterated foods, of any kind. But we are not, generally, so particular about pure food laws for the soul, or spirit, of man. *We may not consider those laws are all found in the Bible.* Yes, those laws are found there, and *so is the food itself.* The laws and the food are the same. David said, "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Again: "Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it." See Psalms 12: 6; 119: 140. Now we are prepared for the following: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." See Psalm 119: 9. We are prepared for this also: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." See John 15: 3.

But in order for us to be nourished, and cleansed, and purified, by the divine word, we need to read and study it for our own spiritual welfare. If we study it simply to teach others, or to show how much we know about it, we shall not find ourselves growing in it, nor purified by it. A man might sit down to a table of food, and carve and dish out for all others at the table without being benefited. If he would not dish out for himself, and partake for himself, he would leave the table hungry. If he would continue to do so he might starve in the midst of plenty. This illustrates, in some measure, the condition of those who study the Bible chiefly, if not wholly, for others. They cut and carve and dish out for others, but not for themselves. They feed others, but do not feed themselves. As a result

they are spiritually starving in the midst of spiritual food. As a further result, they are ill-tempered and hateful, or sluggish and indifferent. Preachers are often in this condition, and do not know what ails them. They study the word of God for the benefit of others, and think that their duty is done when they arrange a good discourse for others. They may preach well to others, and show them the right way. They may even preach about humility, and devotion, and prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving. But their own souls are unhappy, and they do not suspect the cause.

Such preachers will tell others that they should be ready and willing to hear reproof when they have done wrong, and should be disposed to turn from the error of their ways. But if some one charges them with an error, in either doctrine or practice, that one will be reminded of Solomon's saying, "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot." See Proverbs 9: 7. Those who treat a reprover of any kind, and especially a wise reprover, after that manner, do not show the "meekness of wisdom," of which we read in James 3: 23. Neither do they show that they have received "with meekness the engrafted word," of which we read in James 1: 21. On the contrary, they show a barren religious life, and they suggest the question whether they were ever converted to Christ in heart. They are unhappy, and, as a rule, only need an opportunity to show that they are contemptible.

But those who are truly converted to Christ cannot avoid loving the gospel of Christ, and through Christ and his gospel they will learn to love the entire Bible. Then they will study it with delight in order to learn all that it declares. It will be their meat and their

drink, and the spirit of the truth will be the atmosphere which they will desire for their souls to breathe. In them will be fulfilled the saying of David, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures." See Psalm 36: 8. Those who thus use the word of God do not become restless, nor do they desire human devices in their worship and work. On the contrary, they will feel fully assured that the Lord has given the best arrangements for the conversion of sinners, and for the perfection of believers. At all times, and in all circumstances, they will feel confident that the Lord's arrangements are the best for all conditions and for all ages.

If we have any doubt about the value of God's word and its application to our souls, we should read and study the 119th division of the Book of Psalms. Besides, we should consider the adaptation of the fruits of the earth, the waters of the earth, and the common air, to our physical beings. Those adaptations are satisfactory, and we may regard them as perfect, though they belong only to time. And would the God of heaven and earth make all earthward adaptations perfect, and yet make the heavenward adaptations imperfect? Would he make that perfect which belongs to TIME, but make that imperfect which belongs to ETERNITY? No, *never*.

Moses wrote to the ancient Israelites of God, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Jesus said to Satan, "It is written, Man shall

not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Finally, the Apostle James wrote to all Christians, saying, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."

SERMON NO. VIII

THE MEANING OF DIVINE AUTHORITY

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. Deuteronomy 6: 4. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16: 16.

IN these divine declarations, which we have just read, the foundation of all religious authority is mentioned. "The Lord our God is one Lord." This declaration is the foundation for all the religious authority set forth in the Old Testament. "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This is the declaration which underlies all the authority of the New Testament, or Gospel, Age. These two declarations may be spoken of as statements, or propositions, which God has been careful to prove. When the former of them was proved to the Jews, then all else that God had said to them was accepted as of divine authority. In proportion as the latter of those propositions is proved to us the entire new covenant scriptures are accepted by us as of divine authority.

God did not decide to prove every command that he gave to his ancient people. But he decided to prove that he is the only, true, and living, God. Having proved this, he then gave his commands, and all who believed in him, as the only true God, were required to obey him. All disobedience of his commands was, then, charged to UNBELIEF. See Numbers 20: 12; Hebrews 3: 18, 19. Thus it was; thus it is; and will be.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, at Mount Horeb, he proved to him by a miracle that he was the one who was speaking to him. When Moses was convinced that God was speaking to him he felt that he was under God's authority. Though he did not wish to do that which God commanded him to do, yet he did it. He offered the excuse to God that the people would not believe him. But God met that excuse by a miracle. He then pleaded that he was not a good speaker. But God met his plea by giving to him his brother to speak for him. God had commanded him to go to the king of Egypt and to demand the release of the children of Israel, and he intended that his command should be obeyed. As soon as God spoke to him he was under divine authority, and he was bound to obey, or to rebel against that authority.

We should next consider that when Moses went to the king of Egypt he went by divine authority, and the Lord intended that even that king should submit to his authority. At first the king refused, and said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." But, after ten plagues had been brought upon the land of Egypt, that king was glad to let Israel go. This illustrates the meaning—the bearing—the power—of divine authority. A perverse, stubborn, rebellious, haughty, king was humbled so that he did exactly that which the Lord demanded of him, and even prayed for a blessing from the Lord's chief servants. The divine record declares this in regard to that king: "And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said: also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said,

and begone; and bless me also." See Genesis 12: 31, 32. When the king of Egypt thus spoke to Moses and Aaron he was convinced that, "The Lord our God is one Lord."

But as perverse men often do, after having been humbled before the Lord, so did Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He recovered from his humility, and again became a victim of his pride. "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them." See Exodus 14: 6, 7. Having thus prepared himself he went after the Israelites, and overtook them at the Red Sea. He even followed them into that sea, and then he and his army, that was with him, were drowned. "And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." See Exodus 12: 31.

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and hosts hath he cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee; thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Thus it was that Israel was delivered; the strength of Egypt's army was overthrown; and God's name was magnified, even among other nations. All this was accomplished by the divine authority which was executed in order to prove that, *The Lord our God is one Lord*.

But all that has thus far been considered, in this sermon, may be regarded as only a preface, or preliminary, to the end which God had in view with reference to his own people. He desired to be known to the Egyptians, for he said, "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." See Exodus 14: 18. But the end, which, above all others, God had in view, in working miracles before his ancient people, was to convince them that, *The Lord our God is one Lord*. This is evident from the record to which attention is now invited, as found in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus.

"In the third month when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephadim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up

unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation: these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do: and Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever: and Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes: and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. * * * *
And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And the Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mount

quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice."

Then in the twentieth chapter of Exodus we learn that God gave to his ancient people his ten commands that he wrote on tables of stone and afterwards delivered to Moses. In the three following chapters we learn that he gave to them certain other commands. After that we are informed thus: "And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come; neither shall the people go up with him. And Moses came, and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. * * * And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou

mayest teach them. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua; and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you; and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." All this, and much more, that is set forth in the divine record, God did and said in order to prove the proposition to ancient Israel that, **THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.**

The God of heaven and earth—the Jehovah—the Eternal One—did not propose to work a miracle in connection with every command that he gave in order to enforce it. Neither did he propose to send an angel to every Israelite in order to let him know that he must obey the divine commands. But this purpose was to prove to Israel, at Mount Sinai in Arabia, that, *The Lord our God is one Lord.* When that was proved, then all that God said to Israel, by his chosen law-giver, they were intended to believe, was given by his own divine AUTHORITY. The evidence that he gave to that people was sufficient for all time. He intended to make such use of Moses in the sight of the Israelites that they would BELIEVE HIM FOREVER. See Exodus 19: 9. The question of divine authority the Lord intended to settle at Mount Sinai FOR ALL TIME with the Jewish people. He intended to convince them of his care for them by signs and wonders in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the

wilderness. But his SUPREMACY, his AUTHORITY and THE AUTHORITY OF HIS WORDS, that he gave through Moses, he intended to settle at Mount Sinai. He did settle it there, and he was ever afterwards jealous of it, and for its authority, throughout the Jewish Age. This is evident by the records given of his severe judgments upon those who questioned it, or ignored it.

Take, for instance, the record given in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers concerning the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with certain others. They questioned the authority which God had given to Moses, and to Aaron his brother. "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

The record informs us that the mentioned rebellion was ended by a separation of all others from those who had engaged in it, and their families with them. "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They,

and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation." In view of all this we can understand the danger of QUESTIONING divine authority, and thus understand the MEANING of divine authority.

Now we are prepared to consider another instance of the exercise of divine authority. Though God had been very careful to convince the Israelites at Mount Sinai that, "The Lord our God is one Lord," yet in course of time they forgot the conviction then produced. The same was true of their descendants. God commanded the Israelites, saying, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes: and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

But the Israelites did not always obey these commands in regard to teaching their children, nor in regard to keeping their own minds refreshed concerning the divine word. As a result many of their children grew up in ignorance of that word, and became easy victims of false teachers. Thus it was in the days of the Prophet Elijah, as we may learn by reading the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings. In that chapter we learn that the Israelites had, generally, forgotten that, "The Lord our God is one Lord," and had gone after a heathen god named Baal. We are informed, likewise, in that chapter, of an interview between

the Prophet Elijah and those Israelites. He said to them, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." The people did not answer him. "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God: and all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

The Prophet Elijah then proposed to the prophets of Baal that, as they were many, they should proceed first. They did so, and the record informs us that their effort to get an answer from their god was a failure. Though they called on Baal long and loud, yet he did not answer, because he could not answer.

Then the Prophet Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, and put wood in order upon it, and cut in pieces the bullock he intended to offer, and laid him on the wood. Having done all this he said to those who were present, "Fill four barrells with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood: and he said, Do it a second time. And they did it a second time. And he said, Do it a third time. And they did it a third time. And the water ran about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water." Then the prophet offered a short prayer to the Lord, and "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw

it they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord he is God; the Lord he is God." In this instance we find another illustration of the meaning of divine authority, and evidence of what is meant by the declaration, "The Lord our God is one Lord."

While the Israelites, who were afterwards called Jews, remained convinced that there is only one God, and that he had spoken to them through Moses, they received every one of his commands as of divine authority. God did not need to prove any one of them, by a miracle, though he sometimes gratified one of his servants by a miracle, as in the case of Gideon. See Judges 6: 16-21, 36-40. Yet with a few exceptions of this kind, the Lord required every one whom he commanded to obey him by reason of his authority.

And when certain Israelites forgot the importance of the divine authority, as did Nadab and Abihu, they were slain, or were otherwise punished. See Leviticus 10: 1, 2; Numbers 20: 12. Having revealed himself to his people, the Lord was jealous for his authority, and the severe judgments which he inflicted upon those who disobeyed him show that he did not intend that they should forget that authority. By those judgments God showed that he *meant what he said*, and that he *said what he meant* to his ancient people. In proportion as we learn this we are prepared to understand that God *means what he says*, and *says what he means* to his people who live in the Gospel Age. Those who have not learned this feel as if they can trifle with certain commands of the gospel. Thus it is that ignorance of the Old Testament is the secret of all trifling with the New.

But the proposition that, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," is the one in which we should be most deeply interested. In it is found the authority that

binds all who live in the Gospel Age; at least all to whom the gospel is offered. Because of this the Savior spent about three years of his personal ministry in proving this proposition. His first purpose was to prove it to his disciples so that they would always believe in him, and thus declare to others. Then he proposed to prove his divine Sonship to others through his disciples by enabling certain of them to work miracles, confirming their words in regard to him. The final end in view was to lead the greatest possible number of mankind to accept his authority, and thus bow to his requirements. He knew that if they would believe in him with all their hearts they would certainly accept all his words with confidence and obey all his requirements, with all their hearts. This is clearly implied by the closing words of the twentieth chapter of John's record of the gospel. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

All that is true of the Savior's works is true of his words. He spoke as man had never before spoken. See John 7: 46. By His words, in connection with his works, and by his works in connection with his words, he proved his divinity. Thus, whether we consider His baptism in the Jordan, his reception of the Holy Spirit, his temptation in the wilderness, his sermon on the mount, his interview with Nicodemus, his speech to the woman of Samaria, his feeding of certain multitudes, his raising of the ruler's daughter, and resurrection of Lazarus, his reviving of the widow's son, his cleansing of lepers, healing the palsied, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, or strength to the lame—whether

we consider his controversies with the Jews, his instruction to his disciples, his prayer to his Father, his prayer for his enemies, or his death on the cross—the earthward end in view was to prove himself to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. The heavenward end in view was to fulfill the scripture, and thus to become the atoning sacrifice for mankind. But the earthward end was to prove to mankind that he is the Son of God, and to do this in the manner that would win the hearts of mankind. Reverence and love are the two dispositions in man which the Savior desired to produce in all who would see and hear him, would read the inspired records of his words and works, or would hear them read.

The Old Testament prepares us to have reverence for Christ if we will consider it aright. As previously stated, in this sermon, it shows that God *meant what he said*, and *said what he meant* through Moses and the prophets. This should prepare us to understand, and believe, that He *means what he says*, and *says what he means*, in all that he has declared to us through Christ and his inspired ones of the Gospel Age. In proportion as we believe this we are disposed to accept, with reverence and love, all that He offers to us, and then to obey, with reverence and love, all that he commands us. While filled with reverence and love toward Him we will not plead self-justification, as did the lawyer of whom we read in Luke 10: 29. We will not try to justify ourselves in not doing the divine will, by pretending to be more ignorant than we really are, nor by asking curious questions to shield ourselves in disobedience. On the contrary, by reason of reverence for our Savior's authority, and love for his pure and perfect character, we shall be disposed to accept all that he says *at its full*

value, as far as we are able to do so, and then obey in humility and contrition of spirit *all that he requires*.

Now we are prepared to consider that God charged the disobedience of his ancient people to UNBELIEF and REBELLION. When Moses and Aaron sinned at the waters of strife God said, "Because ye believed me not," and "Because ye rebelled against my word." See Numbers 20: 12, 24. Then when King Saul sinned in regard to the Amalekites God said to him, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." See 1st Samuel 15: 23. Then in Hebrews 3: 18, 19 we read, in regard to Israel in the wilderness, "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The Israelites who disobeyed God, in the wilderness, were charged with unbelief. This means that their faith was defective, and not that they were outspoken infidels. But they did not have sufficient faith to cause them to obey God's commands at all times, and trust his promises with their whole heart. Therefore they were guilty of UNBELIEF.

In view of all this, what may we say of those who now refuse to repent of their sins? God "now commands all men everywhere to repent." See Acts 17: 30. All of that class disregard divine authority, and show a lack of faith, which, in the Bible, is said to be "unbelief," and "rebellion." In the first chapter of Hebrews we are informed that God has spoken to mankind. Yes, the God of heaven and earth has spoken to us. He is the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of mankind. He created the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them. He made the sun, the moon, and the stars. The machinery of the universe is managed by Him, and he does all things well. Perfection is found in all His

works. "As for God, his way is perfect." Besides he is the Eternal One. Before the mountains were brought forth, or He had formed the world, even from everlasting to everlasting he is God. Yet He has been pleased to speak to mankind, and, in his mercy, he has given sinners an opportunity to repent. He even commands them to repent. In that command divine authority is found, and whoever refuses to obey it is in rebellion against that authority.

But this is not all. In Hebrews 1: 1-3 we read this: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." Then we are informed, in the same chapter, that the Son, by whom God has spoken to us in these last days, is better than the angels, also that he is worshipped by the angels, and that he is called "God," and will live forever. Now, when we consider that God has commanded us to repent, and that he has given this command through his Son who is greater than all other beings, except God himself, certainly we should be filled with reverence for his authority. As a result, we should, in humility and contrition of spirit, obey his command to repent. If we refuse to do so, or delay to do so, we show unbelief, rebellion, and stubbornness. We set ourselves against *the highest authority in the universe*, even when that authority is expressed to us by *the highest Being that ever dwelt on earth in the form of man*.

But this is not all. That same authority commands believing, penitent, sinners to be baptized. The baptism that is commanded is *water baptism*. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise to be received by certain persons in course of the period when the gospel was first preached to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. But it was not continued very long. The evidence of such baptism was the gift of tongues, or power to speak languages which had not been learned by those who were enabled to speak them. But Paul declared tongues should "cease." See 1st Corinthians 13: 8. When the gift of tongues ceased we may safely conclude that the baptism, of which that gift was the evidence, also ceased. This leads us, and *leaves* us, and even *IMPELS* us, to conclude that water baptism is the "one baptism" referred to by Paul in Ephesians 4: 5. That baptism is still commanded by divine authority, and it is at our eternal peril that we disregard that command.

In order to understand the importance of the water baptism that God has commanded through Christ, we need to consider the importance of the water baptism that he commanded through John the Baptist. First of all, we learn that the water baptism that was commanded through John was declared to be "the baptism of repentance," for it was connected with repentance, and was a part of the change, or reformation, which John preached. Besides, it was "for the remission of sins," and was required to be done in order that those who wished to be forgiven might receive forgiveness. It is sometimes said to have been "unto" or "into" remission of sins. But in each translation of the scripture, in which it is mentioned, the assurance of remission is *on the other side* of baptism from the alien sinner. See Mark 1: 4. In addition to this we find, by reading

Matthew 3: 14, 15, that the water baptism which John preached was an act of "righteousness," even for the Son of God himself. Jesus requested water baptism of John the Baptist, and spoke of it as an act of "righteousness," or right doing, even for himself. This should settle its importance in the mind and heart of every one who believes in Christ as the Son of God, or even regards him as the perfect exemplar.

But this is not all. The strongest evidence in some respects, of the importance of the baptism which John the Baptist preached, and practiced, is found in Luke 7: 29, 30. In those scriptures we find these statements in regard to John the Baptist and his baptism: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John: but the Pharisees, and lawyers, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Here we are informed that the baptism, which John the Baptist preached, and practiced, was, in some sense, connected with the justification of God, so that those who accepted it acknowledged that God was just in his requirements of them. Besides, we are here informed that the Pharisees and lawyers, who refused to be baptized of John, "rejected the counsel of God against themselves." This shows the importance of John's baptism while it was in force. It was of such importance that those who refused to comply with it "rejected the counsel of God against themselves." Some persons ridicule the idea of water baptism being essential to salvation. All such should consider the scriptures now before us. They should consider, likewise, the character of those who would not be baptized of John. We are informed that they were "Pharisees and lawyers."

But what was the character of the "Pharisees," and what was the character of the "lawyers?" In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew we learn that the Pharisees were seven times declared by the Savior to be "hypocrites." In addition to this he declared them to be "blind guides," "fools and blind," also "serpents" and a "generation of vipers." He likewise said that they were "like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Then, in regard to the lawyers, we learn that the Savior spoke thus: "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." Again: "Woe unto you lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." See Luke 11: 46, 52. Finally, here in Luke 7: 29, 30, we learn that the Savior placed both the "Pharisees" and the "lawyers" below the "publicans," and, thus, below men who were taxgatherers, and were despised of the Jewish people generally. He also placed them below the "sinners" here mentioned. Then in Matthew 21: 31, 32 the Savior placed those who rejected John's baptism as below "the publicans and the harlots." Such was the character of the men who rejected John's baptism which was strictly water baptism, and was "for," or "unto," "remission of sins." They were "hypocrites," "blind guides," "fools and blind," "serpents," and a "generation of vipers," and "like unto whited sepulchres," in the Savior's estimation. Besides, he declared that they were worse than "the publicans, and the harlots," when religiously considered.

In view of all this, what may we say of those who

now reject water baptism—the water baptism that Jesus Christ requires? And what shall we think of those who deny that it is necessary to salvation even while contending for its scriptural form? Certainly they are guilty of rejecting “the counsel of God against themselves.” Besides, they are less excusable in so doing than were “the Pharisees and lawyers,” who rejected John’s baptism. Those “Pharisees and lawyers” did not understand John’s mission, and they did not believe in the divinity of Christ. But those who now refuse to be baptized with water baptism understand John’s mission, in a great measure, and, most of them, profess to believe in the divinity of Christ, and, even, profess to be Christians!

One objection that all such bring against the importance of water baptism is that they “can’t see any use in it.” In response we should refer them to the words recorded in James 2: 10, 11, which read thus: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit not adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.” These scriptures show that every command should be considered from the viewpoint of the AUTHORITY from which it comes. Many commands were given in the Jewish law for which the Jew could not see any use, yet because they were given by God’s AUTHORITY the Jew was required to keep them. Besides, if he rejected even ONE command he, thereby, rejected the AUTHORITY by which it was given, and that was the authority which gave all the other commands. The Apostle James sets forth this idea in the statement, “He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill.” On the same

principle we may say, He that commands us to BELIEVE and REPENT, also commands us to be BAPTIZED. Therefore, if we believe and repent, but refuse to be baptized we sin by omitting a part of our duty.

Let us illustrate. A man has a servant, and tells him to do a dozen different things. He even writes them down for his servant so that he may not say that he forgot any of them. Now suppose when that man afterwards questions his servant about the things he was commanded to do he says, "I did all of them but one, and that one I couldn't see any use in, and for that reason I didn't do it." What would that man say? He might say to that servant, *I don't give you credit for doing anything that I commanded you to do; for if you could not have seen any use in anything that I commanded you to do, you would not have done it.* YOU HAVE DISREGARDED MY AUTHORITY. And what could his servant say? Certainly the same reasoning that would lead him to disobey in one point, because he could not see any use in it, would lead him to disobey in all other points if he could not see any use in them. Therefore, we can understand why the Apostle James said, "Who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." He did not write thus because of the value of that one point, by itself considered, but by reason of the AUTHORITY by which it was given, and because the same reasoning which will lead a man to conclude that he is justified in rejecting one point, will, if adopted in regard to all others, lead him to conclude that he is justified in rejecting them also.

On the same principle many professed Christians disregard the communion, commonly spoken of as "the Lord's supper." The amount of bread and wine, which each one who partakes of the communion receives, is so

small that, from an earthly viewpoint, we cannot see any use in it. Yet, shall we, on that account, reject it? CERTAINLY NOT. What use could Moses have seen in God's command to put blood "upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot," when he consecrated them to the priesthood? See Exodus 29: 20. To ask this question is to answer it in the negative. Yet Moses did not reject God's command because he *could not see any use in it*. Neither should we do so if we expect to be acceptable in God's sight.

But some say that water baptism cannot be necessary to salvation because it would condemn so many good people who have lived and died without it? In answer we should state that the best man that ever walked the earth was the man Christ Jesus, and he traveled a long distance to be baptized with water baptism in order to "fulfill all righteousness." See Matthew 3: 13-15. Then the next best man was the Apostle Paul, and he was buried with Christ by baptism in order to be made "free from sin." See Romans 6: 4, 17, 18. The same was true of all the others who became Christians when the gospel was preached by inspired men. This is evident by the book of Acts, and other parts of the New Testament.

With all this before us, what shall we say of the people of modern times who have rejected water baptism, or have declared that it is not necessary to salvation? Should we measure and modify the gospel *by their failures*, or shall we measure their failures *by the gospel*? This question, and all others that may rise in regard to certain people of modern times, may be easily answered by all those who accept DIVINE AUTHORITY

as the end of all controversy in regard to religion. The gospel of Christ is given by DIVINE AUTHORITY, and every part of it is offered to us by that authority. Therefore, those who reject, or ignore, any part of it, certainly ignore the authority by which that part is given.

Can any of us afford to do this? Can we afford to set ourselves in opposition to the Maker of heaven and earth? In Isaiah 45: 9 we read, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" And, that woe has never been recalled nor modified. Let us therefore consider the divine authority by which God has spoken to us, especially as he has approached us by his Son who had glory with him before the world was brought into existence, and who is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Let us bow in humble submission to that authority in order that we may live and die rejoicing in the divine promises, and thus rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

SERMON NO. IX

THE MEANING OF BELIEF IN CHRIST

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3: 36.

A CERTAIN man, who professed to believe in Christ, as the Son of God, said that Moses was a "tremendous liar." That man had, probably, been reading the writings of a certain infidel who wrote about the so-called "mistakes of Moses." And, that man did not seem to know that Christ endorsed Moses without a criticism, nor that because Christ thus endorsed him he must have been a true historian and a true prophet. That man's lack of information was such that he did not seem to know the relationship between Christ and Moses. Or, his lack of right reasoning was such that he did not understand that Moses and Christ stand, or fall, together.

Christ endorsed the writings of Moses without a criticism, and, therefore, Moses must have written correctly, both as a historian and a prophet, *or Christ is not the Son of God.* Christ could not be the Son of God and endorse a liar. For, if he had done so IGNORANTLY he did not know enough to be the Son of God and if he had done so WILFULLY he was not good enough to be the Son of God.

That which is true of Christ in regard to Moses, is true of him in regard to all other writers of the Old

Testament, and of the entire Old Testament as a document. Christ endorsed all those writers, and all that they had written that was accepted by the Jews, while he was on earth in person, as parts of the Old Testament. As certainly as that he is the Son of God he knew what was regarded as his Father's book when he was on earth. Then the fact that he did not cast a reflection on any part of it, as a record, shows that it *must have been true*. By his direct, and indirect, endorsement of it all he gave to it *his divine sanction*. He did not endorse all the deeds recorded in it, for many of them were written with condemnation. But he endorsed the record, as such, and did not cast a reflection on any part of it as a record. We may therefore say, with safety, that either explicitly, or by implication, Christ endorsed the entire Hebrew scriptures, as they existed while he was on earth, and as we have them now. This does not mean that he endorsed the errors that may have been made in copying those scriptures, nor any errors that have been made in translating them into other languages. But it does mean that he endorsed that which was originally written as the Sacred Text, and as it was found in the best Hebrew manuscripts which were in existence while he was on earth. In view of all this we can understand that belief in Christ as the Son of God means *belief in all that he endorsed*.

But this is only a statement of the beginning of that which belief in Christ means, or embraces. Christ is the FULFILLER of the Old Testament as well as its ENDORSER. He said of himself in his Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." See Matthew 5: 17. Many other declarations in

the New Testament have the same bearing. Christ came to fulfill the Old Testament, and having come for that purpose he endorsed it. Thus, by a twofold evidence, he has given us reason to believe it without a question, and without a doubt, as certainly as that he is the Son of God.

Now we come to consider the New Testament. Christ is its author. This does not mean that he wrote even one word of it with his own hand. But it means that he did speak and act, while on earth, as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John testify of him. It means, likewise, that his apostles, and certain inspired evangelists, did preach and act as the book of Acts declares they did. Then it means that certain of his apostles did write by his authority, for the letters to the churches, and to certain individual Christians, were all written by the aid of the Holy Spirit which Christ sent on his chosen ones. Even the last book in the Bible was written by the same authority. That book is chiefly prophetic, and may be safely spoken of as the book of the second coming of the Lord. In chapter 19: 10 we read, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This intimates, and even shows, that all the lines of divine prophecy are summed up in Jesus Christ. He is the central figure in whom those lines meet, and by reason of whom they receive their value. This being true, we can understand that belief in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is not a little something by itself, and by which mankind can be saved, regardless of the Old Testament, and of much that is recorded in the New. But, on the contrary, it is a far-reaching something that stretches over the entire Bible. Besides, it means obedience to all that Christ requires of us in order that we may become Christians, live the

life of Christians, die the death of Christians, and reach the Christian's home in glory.

In order that we may all understand, and appreciate, all that has thus far been stated in this sermon, we need to be more definite than we have been in considering the subject before us. An inspired apostle wrote thus of our Savior: "Who did no 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 judgeth righteously." See 1st Peter 2: 22, 23. Then in Acts 10: 38 that same apostle spoke thus of our Savior, "Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

These scriptures, taken together, make mention of the beautiful and perfect personal character of our Savior. They declare that he "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." They declare, likewise, that he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," and that "when he was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." Then, in the Savior's baptism; in his temptation in the wilderness; in his Sermon on the Mount; in his cleansing of the leper, and the palsied man, in his healing of the centurion's servant, and curing Peter's wife's mother of a fever; in his stilling of the tempest, and his casting out of evil spirits; in his raising of the ruler's daughter, his calling of Lazarus from the grave, and his restoring of the widow's son to life again; in his interview with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria, and the Syro-Phœnician woman; in all his interviews with his disciples, and in all his controversies with his enemies—in all these facts we see his beautiful and perfect personal character set forth.

But these are not all the facts which set forth that character. The fact that he was considerate toward the poor; that he fed hungry multitudes; that he travelled on foot even to weariness; that he was so poor that he could say he had not a place to lay his head; finally, the fact that he suffered himself to be taken hold of by his enemies, to be buffeted, and spit upon by them; falsely accused and put to death by them—all these facts, likewise, indicate that Christ “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,” and that “when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”

In view of all that has just been stated we may safely conclude that Christ is *inseparably connected* with every fact recorded in the books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He is inseparably connected, likewise, with all his words that were recorded by those writers, and even with all other words, recorded by them, as parts of the books they wrote. Every word of every one of those books is a part of the book to which it belongs, and Christ is inseparably connected with every part of every book of the New Testament which reveals him. This being true we can understand that belief in Christ, as the Son of God, means belief *in all that is set forth* in the gospel records, as offered to us by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Now we are prepared to consider Acts 3: 19 in its bearings. “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” This quotation from Deuteronomy eighteenth chapter the Apostle Peter applied to our Savior. Then he added, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as

many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." The "days" here mentioned were the days when the gospel was offered to the people, beginning with the Jews. When we add to this the saying, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19: 10), we are prepared to understand that belief in Christ as our prophet means *belief in all the other prophets whom God sent to mankind*. If God had not intended to send Christ into the world as the supreme teacher of the children of men he would not have sent any other teacher. This is implied in the saying, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

But Jesus is still the supreme teacher of mankind. His words did not end when, in person, he left this world. On the contrary, they continued to be spoken, and by his own arrangement. Before he left this world, in person, he said to his Father of his disciples, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them." See John 17: 18. Those words they were afterward required to preach by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Even the Apostle Paul—the last apostle that was chosen—connected his words with the Lord Jesus Christ. See 1st Corinthians 7: 10; 14: 37. He said, "And to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord;" and again: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." In the light of these sayings of Paul we are forced to conclude that Christ continued to speak after he left the earth, and that he is still speaking to mankind in the written words of his chosen ones. The words of Jesus, therefore, were not all recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But he continued to speak after he left this world, and he

still continues to speak to us by the Holy Spirit through his apostles, and by those inspired evangelists who assisted the apostles in making up the New Testament.

All that we have thus far considered in this sermon prepares us for Hebrews 3:1. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus." Here we find that Jesus is declared to be "the Apostle" of our profession, likewise the "High Priest" of our profession. As "the Apostle" he is the one whom God proposed to send into the world for man's salvation. Then by reason of that purpose, or proposal, he sent many others into this world in order to do something toward man's salvation. Finally, after Jesus had actually come into this world he received power, in due time, to send others for man's salvation. But every one whom God sent, in the Old Testament ages, was certainly sent *by reason of Christ*. If God had not intended to send him he would *not have sent any one else*. Then, after he came into the world, certain others were chosen, and prepared, to be sent forth into the world. But all of that number were chosen and prepared by him, and by reason of him, in his behalf, and for the salvation of mankind.

Next we should consider that Christ is our High Priest. Every high priest mentioned in the Old Testament, as ordained of God, became such by reason of God's purpose to send Christ into this world, and to make him our High Priest. The high priests that were chosen from among men, by divine arrangement, *were all chosen in view of Christ*, and found their value in him. If God had not intended to bring Christ into the world, and cause him to become our High Priest, other high priests would not have been ordained of God, and if

they had been chosen of men, without God's approval, their official work *would have been in vain*. In view of this we can understand that Christ's priesthood is inseparably connected with the priesthood of the Old Testament. Even the priesthood in the first age of the world, when every man was a priest for himself, and for his family if he had one—even that priesthood referred to Christ and was fulfilled in him. He gave value to it by his own priesthood. Yes, he even gave EXISTENCE, as well as VALUE, to it, as the substance gives existence and value to the shadow. In view of this we can understand that to believe in Christ as the Son of God means to believe in the value of the priest-hoods of former religious ages, as far as God ordained them. Christ is inseparably connected with them, and to accept him as God's Son means to believe in the value of such priest-hoods by reason of their relation to Christ.

But this is not all. John the Baptist said of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." See John 1: 29. Then in Revelation 13: 8 he is spoken of as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This means that God's purpose "from the foundation of the world" was to give Christ in behalf of mankind to die in order that they might have life. God desired beings in his own image who would love him because he first loved them. See 1st John 4: 19. By reason of that desire the divine Father decided to create this world, and place mankind on it, likewise to place them on trial in order to test their love for him. He foresaw that they would sin, and made provision for them beforehand by arranging an atoning sacrifice in their behalf. Thus it was that Christ, in the divine Father's purpose, was "slain from the foundation of

the world," and became "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." As such he gave value to all other lambs that were slain, by divine appointment, from the first that was slain by our first parents, or their descendants, down to the last one that was offered as an atonement for sin before Christ was nailed to the cross. The same was true of all other offerings that were made by divine appointment. They all referred to Christ, were fulfilled in him, and found their value in him. Without him they would have been solemn mockeries, and empty performances. In view of this we can clearly see that Christ is inseparably connected with all the offerings which were made in the Old Testament ages according to divine appointment. Therefore, to believe in Christ as the Son of God is to believe that all those offerings were really made, and that they were of value, before God, by reason of their relation to Christ.

Finally, we should consider Christ as King. Pilate asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and again, "Art thou a king, then?" To this Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." This answer of Jesus was so well understood by Pilate that he wrote in Hebrew and Greek and Latin this inscription: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," and caused it to be placed, over his head, on the cross to which he was nailed. "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written." See John 19: 19 22. In addition to this we should consider Colossians 1: 13, which informs us that God is the one "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." This im-

plies that Christ had actually become King, for he had a kingdom into which his subjects had been translated, at the time Paul wrote to the Colossians. Of course, it was not a kingdom of this world. See John 18: 36. But it was a spiritual kingdom, and continues the same. His rulership over it will continue till the time mentioned in 1st Corinthians 15: 24, 25. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." All these scriptures, and certain others, clearly show that Jesus came into this world to become a spiritual ruler so high and great that he should be called "King," likewise that when he ascended to heaven he became such a ruler, and his people were declared to be in his kingdom. This means that, as King, he is the chief ruler of his people, and is their law giver, likewise that he is the Fulfiller of all the prophecies that referred to him as King. In Psalm 2: 6 God referred to him thus: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." This is an index to many other scriptures that bear in the same direction. Therefore to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to believe in him as our King.

Nor is this all. Christ as our King is the Fulfiller of all that was foreshadowed by the good that there was in all the kingly characters in the Old Testament, from the first to the last that God caused to be anointed for the throne. Therefore, to accept him as our King is to accept all the good that was in the Jewish kings. Christ was inseparably connected with them, and, having come, he endorsed the record which makes mention of them. For these reasons we can clearly un-

derstand that to believe in Christ as the Son of God is to believe the divine record concerning the kings of the Old Testament period. If some one says, there is contradiction in that record in regard to some of those kings, we should answer that DIFFERENT statements, and even statements that are so different that they seem CONTRARY, are not CONTRADICTIONS. All contrary statements admit of explanation. They are simply DIFFERENT statements, and may be explained, for they DO NOT EXCLUDE each other. But CONTRADICTORY statements DO EXCLUDE each other, and *cannot both be true*. Such statements are not found in the Bible concerning the kings of Israel and Judah, nor in regard to any other subject which is mentioned in any part of the Bible, either Old Testament or New. Therefore, we may safely say that belief in Christ as the Son of God means belief in him as our King, and, belief in the record of all that is found in the Old Testament concerning the kings that God ordained. It does not mean the endorsement of their evil deeds, but it means acceptance of the record concerning them, which the Lord Jesus Christ endorsed in the New Testament.

But this is not all. To believe in Christ as our King means to believe in him as our lawgiver. "There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy." See James 4: 12. The Apostle James, in thus writing, referred to God, the Father, for he is the one from whom all divine laws have come. Yet in John 5: 22, 23 we read, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father: he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father who hath sent him." Here we learn that Christ was authorized to be the Judge among mankind while he was here on

earth. Then in Matthew 5: 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44 we learn that six times the Savior contrasted his teaching with that of the Old Testament. This shows that he is the Lawgiver of the New Testament Age.

Next we learn in Matthew 28: 18 that Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The Greek word here translated by the word "power" means also "authority, rule, dominion, jurisdiction." This shows that the Father committed all authority to the Son, both in heaven and on earth. This certainly means that he is the lawgiver for his people in the Gospel Age. Besides, as the Jewish law was a "shadow" of the gospel of Christ (Hebrews 10: 1), we may safely say that both Moses and the prophets wrote in view of Christ, and by reason of Christ. Therefore all law both in the Old Testament and the New is centered, and concentered, in Christ, for God has given all law by reason of him. This being true, we may again say—and say with confidence—that *Christ is our Lawgiver*.

But as our Lawgiver, the Lord Jesus Christ did authorize, and empower, certain chosen ones to speak and write his law. That law is for the alien sinner, for the erring Christian, and for the obedient Christian. For the alien sinner it is made up of faith, repentance, confession of faith in Christ, and baptism, with calling on the name of the Lord. All this we may learn by reading the book of Acts. Then the law for the erring Christian consists of faith, repentance, confession of wrong, and prayer. This we may learn by reading Acts 8: 22, and James 5: 16. Finally, the law for obedient Christians is found in the entire New Testament, but is summed up in 2nd Peter 1: 5-10. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;

and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity: for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence, to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

All of these laws are given by the authority of Christ, as our King. They are found in the New Covenant scriptures. In them "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness." See 2nd Peter 1: 3. In the last chapter of those scriptures we find the following: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." See Revelation 22: 18, 19. These warnings in regard to additions to the last book in the Bible, and in regard to subtractions from that book, ought to be sufficient to cause all mankind who read them to understand that Christ as King is jealous for his word. Neither in the text of his word, nor in making it known to mankind, does he intend that any one else shall add to it, nor take from it, nor modify it.

Some may think that they do not add to the divine word while they do not *add to its text*, yet feel at liberty

to add to it in *dealing it out to mankind*. But what would they say of a druggist who would declare that he had not *added* to a doctor's prescription simply because he had not added to the text of it, though he had put a medicine in with it that the prescription *did not order*? This question exposes the fallacy of those who think that they must ADD TO the text of the Bible, or TAKE FROM that text, in order to be justly charged with ADDING TO or TAKING FROM the divine word.

The conclusion for which we are now prepared is that all those are in danger, who, in any measure or degree, in any shape, form or fashion, add new laws, rules or regulations to the New Covenant scriptures. The last book in the Bible is the finishing document of the Bible, even as the roof of a house is the finishing of its external parts, when all has been finished up to the roof. Then whoever adds to the roof of a house adds to all other parts of the house. The same is true of any one who will add to the internal finishings of a house. He will be guilty of adding to the house as such. This being true, we can understand the endangered condition of all who have adopted the secret confessional to a priest, or the open confessional to anyone else, as an institution; the cloister, or the mourner's bench, or the anxious seat; infant sprinkling, infant church-membership, or child confirmation; instrumental music in worship, or man-made societies in the work of the church; festivals, funny lectures, or magic lantern shows, to raise money for the church. Any, and all, of these endanger those who adopt them because they are *additions to the New Covenant scriptures* in FACT though not in FORM.

But some may say that they have a right to some of the things just mentioned because they can so inter-

pret the law of Christ as to justify them. In answer to such as speak thus we should say, that *any interpretation of law which adds new law, or new institutions not mentioned in the text of the law that is interpreted, is certainly wrong.* Such liberty in the interpretation of law would be *the overthrow of all law and of all authority.* This needs only to be stated in order to be understood and admitted by all who think aright.

Nor is this all. In any kingly government, of this world, all who would, by pretense of interpretation of the king's laws, set up new institutions, and make new laws to rule them, which the king has not authorized would certainly be charged with treason. The same is true in a republic. Those who make laws, and set up institutions in a republic, which are not mentioned, at least by permission, in the laws of the republic—those who do this, and are not authorized lawmakers for the republic, are certainly guilty of treason, which is regarded as the highest crime against any civil government. Those who are not authorized lawmakers in any civil government may meet, and pass resolutions of respect for the laws, and lawmakers, that exist in that government. But if they then proceed to make NEW LAWS, and establish NEW INSTITUTIONS not authorized by that government, **THEY ARE GUILTY OF TREASON.** If their procedure is not checked others may follow their example, and the original government will be overthrown. If it is a kingly government, the king will soon find himself powerless to control his subjects. The same is true in regard to religion. If any church would allow factions to set themselves up, and legislate for themselves, that church would soon be powerless to control its members.

With all this before us we are prepared to under-

stand that religious creed-makers, of all kinds, are certainly guilty of TREASON against Christ as King. They have arranged laws, set up churches, as separate institutions beyond his church, and have adopted practices, *which he has never authorized*. They have passed resolutions of respect for Christ, and his laws, yet they have, by implication, declared that *he did not know* how to arrange for the success of his cause in all time, and that they need to help him. By so doing they have been guilty of TREASON against Christ as King. The same is true of all others who have arranged human societies or institutions of any kind to do religious work.

Now we are prepared to consider the position of those who teach that we can be saved by Christ without being saved by his ordinances. In order to bring that position and its erroneousness clearly before our minds an incident should be related. Many years ago a lady of a certain church approached an elder of that church and offered to him a certain book which she requested him to read. He said to her that he had but little time for reading books, and asked her what was the special teaching of that book on account of which she wished him to read it. She answered, "It sets forth the doctrine that we are saved by Christ, and NOT by ordinances, and I would like to know what you think of that doctrine." Then that elder turned to a preacher of Christ, who was present, and requested him to deal with that doctrine. As a result the following interview was introduced:

"My sister," said the preacher, "do you believe in Christ as the Son of God, and the Savior of the world?" "I certainly do," was her answer. "Do you believe all that is set forth in the New Testament about Christ?"

"I do." "Then the Christ that you believe in was actually baptized in the river Jordan was he not?" "Yes." "And he actually commanded all who would become Christians to be baptized, and attend to the communion—did he not?" "Yes." "Then is not the Christ in whom you believe INSEPARABLY connected with his ordinances? Think a little before you answer." "Yes, it is true—the Christ I believe in is inseparably connected with his ordinances." "How then are you going to believe in him, and be saved by him, and not believe in his ordinances and be saved by them?" "I see it low—I see it CLEARLY. This book is based on an error. Christ and his ordinances *cannot be separated.*"

Yes, Christ and his ordinances are INSEPARABLE, even as Christ and his character are INSEPARABLE. He cannot be separated from his personal character, nor from his official character. Therefore, he cannot be separated from his character as Prophet, as Apostle, as Priest, as Sacrifice, nor as King. Neither can he be separated from any part of the divine record which reveals him in any part of his personal, or in his official, character. That is to say, we cannot believe in him as Jesus of Nazareth, and deny a part of the record which reveals him as Jesus of Nazareth. Nor can we believe in him as our Prophet, and yet deny any part of the record which reveals him as our Prophet. The same is true in regard to him as our Apostle, and High Priest, and Sacrifice, and as our King. We cannot believe in him in any one of these offices, and yet reject any part of the record which reveals him in such offices. Thus, the one who says he believes in Christ, but rejects Moses does not understand what is meant by believing in Christ. The same is true of all who say they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Savior, but

do not believe in being saved by his ordinances.

And what shall we say of those who profess to believe in Christ, but reject the book of Jonah? They do not understand what is meant by belief in Christ. They do not know that Christ endorsed the book of Jonah without a criticism. He said, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days, and three nights in the heart of the earth." See Matthew 12: 40. How can any one believe in Christ as the Son of God, and yet reject a book that he endorsed without a criticism, especially as he used the chief item of that book as an illustration with reference to himself? To ask this question is to answer it.

And what shall we say of those who declare they believe in Christ, but do not believe that Job was a real man? They do not know what belief in Christ embraces. In James 5: 11 we learn that Christ endorsed the story of Job's patience through an inspired apostle. Besides, Christ endorsed the Old Testament prophets without a criticism, and in Ezekiel fourteenth chapter we learn that Job is several times mentioned as a man, as having righteousness, as having a soul, and as having influence with God. Besides, in that chapter, Job is classed with Noah and Daniel, both of whom must be admitted to have been REAL MEN who dwelt on the earth among men. Finally, Christ made mention of Noah and Daniel with endorsement, even as he mentioned Jonah with endorsement, and through the Apostle James he mentioned Job with endorsement. Therefore, we may again say that those who profess to believe in Christ yet reject the story of Jonah, and deny that Job was a real man, do not understand what believing in Christ embraces or means. They are like

those who say they believe in salvation by Christ, but not by ordinances. To pronounce them infidels would be an unjust reproach on their faith, and an unjust compliment on their reason. They do not mean to be infidels concerning Christ, but they do not understand what is meant by believing him.

In conclusion we may safely state that Christ is inseparably connected with the first chapter of the book of Genesis, and with every other chapter of that book. The same is true in regard to every other book in the Old Testament, and every book of the New Testament. He is connected with all that he fulfilled, all that he endorsed, and all that he authorized. Therefore, to believe in him is to believe the entire Bible, though we may not understand it all. When a man marries into a family he becomes related to all the relatives of that family, though he may not know them all, and may never see them all. The same is true in regard to our belief in Christ. We thereby become related to all with which he is inseparably connected, though we may not understand it all.

All those who have thus considered this subject have considered it aright, and know what the Savior meant when he said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." We who understand what belief in Christ means should obey Christ wholeheartedly, and then we shall rejoice in the promise of everlasting life, and in that sense will have everlasting life. We will have it in promise.

But we should bear in mind that the belief, which gives to us eternal life in promise, does not allow us to trim down the Savior's commands to suit our notions. It does not allow us to change a burial in water baptism

to the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the head or face. Neither does it allow us to change the weekly communion into the monthly, nor quarterly, nor yearly, communion. Nor does it allow us to pass from a life "unspotted from the world" to a life of worldliness. On the contrary, such belief as gives us eternal life in promise is the "faith" that is set forth in the eleventh chapter of Paul to the Hebrews. That faith, or degree of faith, requires us to take God at his word in regard to doctrine and practice, worship and work, both publicly and privately, with confidence and evermore.

SERMON NO. X

THE SECRET OF THE EXISTENCE OF ALL RELIGIOUS ERROR

Jesus answered, and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. Matthew 22: 29.

IN this saying of our Savior we find a truth that may be always applied in regard to all errors in religion. It is of universal application—is always true. Adam and Eve did not know “the power of God” when they sinned, nor when they tried to hide from God after they had sinned. The same was true of their eldest son when he sinned in regard to worship, when he slew his brother, and when he tried to hide his crime. And the same has been true of all the other sinning descendants of our first parents, even to the time now present. The same will be true of those who will hereafter sin, even till the end of time.

Since God’s written word has been offered to mankind, we may safely say that all sin which has been committed, and all error which has been cherished, may be justly explained by this saying of our Savior: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.”

Let us now consider the occasion which caused the Savior to make use of this saying. Certain Pharisees approached him, and tried to “entangle him in his talk.” “And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou

art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men: tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money: and they brought unto him a penny: and he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's. When they heard these words they marvelled, and left him, and went their way."

But the Savior was not to be left alone. "The same day came to him the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. Now, there were with us seven brethren; and, the first, when he had married a wife deceased, and having no issue left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God: for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this they were astonished at his doctrine."

In the record just brought before our minds, we can understand that the Sadducees were in error concerning the resurrection of the body. They cherished that error because of imaginary difficulties, which they supposed, in regard to the marriage relation if the dead would be raised again. They were not willing to let the divine Father manage his own affairs, nor were they willing to believe that he would do all things well in the world to come, even as he had done them in this world. Nor were they willing to respect the silence of the scriptures. They did not consider the bearing of Deuteronomy 29: 23, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

That which was true of the ancient Sadducees is true of many persons who now live, and even of many who profess to be Christians. They deny the resurrection of the body because of supposed difficulties in gathering together all the elements of which the body is composed. They will tell of a man who lost an arm in one country, and a leg in another, and an ear in another, and then will talk flippantly of the lost arm and leg and ear, in the resurrection, flying through the air to find the body to which they will belong. All such talk is based on the supposition that, in the resurrection, all particles and parts that were in the body at death will need to be raised and returned to all the other parts of which the body was then composed. The Apostle Paul had a short way of dealing with such talkers. He said, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest

not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

By the illustration here used Paul shows that we should not expect that the entire body that is laid in the grave will be raised again. Not all of the grain of wheat that is sown in the earth is raised, but only a small part of it. From the heart of it a sprout comes forth, and the grain, as such, remains in the earth. Then God gives to that sprout, or spear, a new body, or stalk. Using the grain of wheat as an illustration, we may reasonably suppose that only from the heart, which is the seat of the animal life, will any part of the human body be raised. In God's arrangement only enough may be raised to preserve the identity of the body. Then God will change the part that is raised to immortality, and make it the basis of a new body, even as he makes the shoot from the old grain of wheat the basis of a new body or stalk. But, even if God should decide to gather together every part and particle of the body that was laid in the grave, we should not question his power to do it. He gathered together the particles of the first body, and has wonderfully gathered and preserved every other body, whether in the animal, or vegetable, or mineral, kingdom. And He understands his own business. All who imagine difficulties, which God cannot overcome, thereby show that they "do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God "

The next error that we should consider is that of soul-sleeping—the doctrine that the souls of mankind are unconscious between death and the resurrection. Those who hold that doctrine profess to think that man is entirely mortal—body, soul, and spirit. They pre-

tend to think that the soul, even when the word "soul" is used in the sense of spirit, is only common air, or, at the most, is only a spark of electricity. As a result, they pretend to think that when man's body becomes lifeless his soul is mingled with common air, or electricity, and loses its identity. As a further result, they say that when man dies he "dies all over."

But the Savior, in his speech to certain Sadducees that we are now considering, confuted that doctrine. He said that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then added, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." This becomes more evident when we read Luke 20: 37, 38, in which scripture the Savior is represented as saying, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." This means that those who are physically dead *live unto God in some other sense. That other sense must refer to the soul*, when used in the sense of spirit. An apostle makes use of it in that sense when he says, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." See 1st Peter 1: 9. Besides, in Revelation 6: 9 we read this: "And when he had opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Those souls are represented as alive and speaking, and that, too, between death and the resurrection. This in itself should be sufficient to convince all who think aright that the soul-sleeping doctrine is an error. But this, and the Savior's declaration that "all live" unto God, should be overwhelming to all who think reasonably. Therefore, those who teach that the soul, or

spirit, sleeps in the grave with the body, or is otherwise unconscious between death and the resurrection, "do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

The next error which we should consider is that which resulted from the ancient Israelites not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. God knew the value of his commandments to the Israelites. Therefore, he addressed them thus in regard to those commandments: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes: and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." See Deuteronomy 6: 6-9. Then in Deuteronomy 27: 1-4, 8 we find the following: "And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day: and it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee: therefore, it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. . . . And there thou shalt write upon the stones

all the words of this law very plainly." Then in Deuteronomy 31: 10-13 we find this: "And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles; when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and that their children, who have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

These scriptures which we have just read inform us concerning God's idea of the value of his words to his ancient people. He knew that his words would keep them from error, if they would fully make the right use of them. He knew also that his people would go astray if they would not fully make the right use of his words. Therefore, He was careful to instruct his people in regard to the value of his words, and the course they should adopt, both privately and publicly, in order to learn his words and teach others in regard to them. They were commanded to talk of them in their homes, and when they would leave their homes; they were to teach their children with reference to them; they were to set up stones and plaster them over with plaster, and then write on them all the words of the divine law "very plainly." Then they were commanded to call all the people together, "men, women, and children, and the strangers" that were among them, and to all of them the divine law was commanded

to be read. Then in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy the Lord endeavored to encourage his people, by promises of the highest earthly blessings, if they would obey his commands. In that same chapter He endeavored, by threatening of most terrible of earthly curses, to prevent them from going contrary to his commands.

But in the midst of peace and prosperity the Israelites forgot God's words in private and in public. They suffered their children to grow up in ignorance of His words, and soon both parents and children became perverse. In course of time they became rebellious. Then God gave them into the hands of certain of their enemies for correction. When they repented He raised them up a deliverer. But they soon forgot Him again, because they did not obey his commands in regard to learning and obeying his words. Then He gave them into the hands of some others of their enemies. When they again repented He again raised them up a deliverer. This was repeated six times in course of the period mentioned in The Book of Judges.

After that period was ended the days of the kings were introduced. But all through those days we learn that God's commands in regard to teaching the people his word were neglected. Not once are we informed that stones were set up, and plastered over with plaster, and that the words of the law were written upon them. Not once are we informed that all the Israelites were gathered together, at the feast of tabernacles, so that the law might be read to them. The only exception to this was in the case of King Jehosaphat as we read in 2nd Chronicles 17: 7-9, in the third year of his reign.

As an instance of such ignorance, or presumption, let us consider the conduct of David in moving the ark of God. In 1st Chronicles 13: 5 we are informed that he "gathered all Israel together" for that purpose, and that he made a failure, in regard to moving it, besides occasioning the death of an earnest man. Then in 1st Chronicles 15: 11-15 we are informed that David called certain Levites together and required them to move the ark "as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord," and then he made a success in moving it, without occasioning the death of any one. Nor is this all. David's sin in numbering Israel, which occasioned the death of seventy thousand men (1st Chronicles 21st chapter), was committed as a result of ignorance of God's word. If he did it through pride he sinned by gratifying his pride, and if he simply failed to give the ransom that God required, he certainly sinned through ignorance, or perverseness. Here is the law on that subject: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them." Therefore, David had a right to number Israel, if he desired to do so with the right motive. But the record does not inform us that he gave the required ransom, nor that he required the people to give it. As a result there was a plague inflicted of the Lord, and seventy thousand men of Israel perished.

Then take the sins of Solomon as king. Though wise above all other men, yet he did not know how to behave himself, nor manage the kingdom, without obeying the divine commands in regard to learning the

law of the Lord. Let us consider those commands in regard to the king of Israel. In Deuteronomy 17: 14-20 we find this instruction to Israel in regard to a king: "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethen shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee who is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

But the kings of Israel generally failed to obey the instructions we have just read. David, and several others, seem to have loved the divine word, though David several times seemed to have forgotten it. But, with these exceptions they treated it with indifference. Solomon did the very opposite of that which the Lord

commanded in regard to horses, gold, silver, and wives. As a result, he oppressed the people that were under him (1st Kings 12: 4), and built high places for his idolatrous wives (1st Kings 11: 6-8), and laid the foundation for all the national miseries which afterwards came upon the Israelites. Finally, in Isaiah 5: 13, we read, "Therefore, my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge." Then, in Hosea 4: 6, we read, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." All of this confirms the text which declares, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God."

And what was true of the Jews while Christ was on earth? They rejected him because of ignorance. Peter declared this when he said, "And now, brethren, I wot [know] that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." See Acts 3: 17. Paul confirms this idea in 1st Corinthians 2: 6-8, of which we need only to quote a part. He says, "Howbeit, we speak the wisdom of God among them that are perfect . . . which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Therefore, from first to last the miseries of the Jewish people may be summed up in this saying of our Savior: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God."

And the same may be said of the New Testament church. Because certain Jewish brethren did not know "the scriptures, nor the power of God," as that power is set forth in the gospel, they taught Gentile Christians, "Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." By so doing they caused a strife that is mentioned in Acts fifteenth chapter, and in many places in certain letters of Paul to

Christians. Those Jewish brethren did not know the bearing of Colossians 2: 10, which declares to Christians, "And ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." But they seemed to think that Christians were complete in Christ and Moses combined. That which they seemed to think, in this respect, was adopted by others, and enlarged upon by others, and enlarged upon by them, until, in course of time, the gospel was mixed with Judaism, heathenism, and human philosophy. As a further result, two great churches were established, namely, the Roman Catholic, and the Greek Catholic. And what may we say of these churches? We may say of them, and of all their leaders, as well as of their private members, that they "do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." The same is true of all Protestant denominations, even down to the Salvation Army. We need not question the honesty of any man who is earnestly religious. But if he is wrong we may explain it all by saying that he errs "not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God."

Many persons say of Catholic priests that they are dishonest, for they certainly KNOW better than to teach their people the doctrines that they offer to them. But we ought not to charge them with dishonesty, if they are earnestly religious, and most of them seem to be in earnest. The explanation is found in their *ignorance of the Bible*. They may be learned men, and may know much about many things. *But they do not understand the right divisions of the Bible*. Not one of them seems to understand Romans 10: 4, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." But they will go back to the Jewish law with the utmost innocence, as far as we can judge, for all the prominent

parts of their organization. For their priesthood and their high priest; their priestly robes and their incense; for their altar and their sacrifice; for their images and their infant church-membership; for their musical instruments and their choir of singers—for all these, and more, they go back to the Jewish law. In so doing they disregard the scriptures which declare, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes;" and again, "Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." Therefore, we may safely say to them, as the Savior said to certain Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

What is true of the Roman Catholics is true of the Greek Catholics, to the extent that they have appealed to the law given through Moses as a foundation for their organization, and for their practices. And all that is true of the Greek Catholics, in that respect, is true of all Protestant denominations who appeal to the law for priestly robes, for a clergy as a separate class, for infant church-membership, musical instruments, and church choirs. They also do err, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

We need not to impeach the honesty of any earnest religionist in the Catholic, nor in the Protestant, part of the religious world. Nor do we need to impeach the honesty of the earnest ones among the Jews, the Mohametans, nor the heathen, in order to account for their errors. They do not know the scriptures, nor the power of God. This is evident by that which they do and say that is contrary to the scriptures.

But why do not Catholics and Protestants, who have the Bible in their homes, and in the most convenient form, understand the scriptures, nor the power of

God, as set forth in the gospel? *Simply because they do not study the Bible aright.* They do not study it chapter after chapter, paragraph after paragraph, and sentence after sentence. They do not study it from beginning to end so as to learn that the divine history explains the divine doctrine, and that the divine history and doctrine together explain the divine prophecies. They do not study the Bible so as to know that every scripture *must be considered* in its historic position—bearings—relations—in order to be understood. As a result they misapply many scriptures, and do not seem to know that the most dangerous error is a misapplied truth.

And what may we say of the so-called “higher critics,” with all other shades and grades of infidels? From the atheist down to the latest quibbler concerning the truth of the Bible, they all “do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” They show it in every chapter that they write, and in every speech that they make, against the Bible. Sometimes, on every page of their writings, they show that they have never studied the Bible with care. Moreover their methods of reasoning show that they have not studied the science of the laws of thought with any advantage. On the contrary, they substitute assumption for fact, and speculation for truth, as innocently as if they had never been trained to think—except in the school of sophistry. They profess to be educated, yet show that they are presumptuous and speculative, and that they do not hesitate to pronounce against a volume of whose fundamentals, or leading thoughts, they are grossly ignorant.

And what may be said of those professed disciples of Christ who have gone astray after religious societies,

religio-secular schools, and other devices, to do a part of the work of the church, and have gone after musical instruments to assist in the worship of the church? With one accord they show that they "do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Many of them make a show of learning in the Bible, but they need only to be tested on fundamentals—the foundation truths—of the Bible, and they will show that they do not understand them. Like the sectarians, whom they try to imitate, they appeal to the Old Testament for justification of their musical instruments and church choirs in worship, and would rather take imperfect David, than his perfect and royal Son, as a guide on these questions. By so doing they show that they do not understand the bearing of Romans 10: 4, with Colossians 2: 10, which declare, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes;" and, "Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." Then, in the methods of reasoning they adopt in behalf of their educational and missionary societies, they show that they have not been educated sufficiently to know that any interpretation of law, either human or divine, which creates new law, or new institutions not mentioned in the original law, is VICIOUS, and if fully adopted is destined to *undermine all law*. They show, by their methods of reasoning, that sophistry is all that they care for in order to make a show of defense for their devices. But the tree is known by its fruits, and in due time their devices will produce such a harvest of strife, contention, and worldliness, that they may be known and read of all men. The divine doctrine, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is *still true*, and those who "sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

But what shall we say of those disciples who go to the other extreme, and who, in order to avoid unscriptural broadness, become unscripturally narrow, or in order to avoid being unscripturally inclusive become unscripturally exclusive? Those who make up that class are so fearful of doing something **WRONG** that they rule out much that is **RIGHT**. From first to last they "do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." They do not study the Bible aright, for they show that they do not know its bearings, except in a few particulars. Some of them strain nearly every scripture that they consider. They show themselves to be unscripturally intense, and some of them seem to hate error more than they love truth. But that disposition is suffered to show itself to the disturbing of churches, and hindering of the gospel, because those possessing it do not know the scriptures nor the power of God.

The same is true in regard to all who accept any item of doctrine or practice that is erroneous, from the Romish purgatory to the uniform of the so-called Salvation Army. All who are earnest religionists may be honest, and we need not to impeach their honesty in order to account for their errors. They may be perfectly sincere, and yet be wrong because they do not understand the scriptures. A business man of large experience said he believed that the majority of mankind would be disposed to do right if they could only be convinced that it will pay them best to do right. Yes, that is the question—"Will it pay?" Will it pay to spend much time searching the scriptures, so as to know them from beginning to end? Will it pay to study the Bible more than we study all other books? The answer to this question depends on the value of our

souls. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" In proportion as we value our souls we will feel the importance of studying the Bible, so that we may know the scriptures and the power of God as revealed in them.

But how may we study the Bible so as to understand it? In answer to this question we may safely say that we should study it with reverence, and study it with love; we should study it daily, and study it with care. Finally, we should study it chapter after chapter, also by topics or subjects *after we have its history clearly before our minds*. We are not prepared to understand any scripture except as we understand its *historic connection in the chapter and book in which it is found*.

The Bible is offered to us by the Being who created the universe, and who has shown himself to be unlimited in wisdom and power, and to be of divine goodness and mercy. Because of His wisdom and power we should be filled with reverence for him, and because of his goodness and mercy we should be filled with love for him. Then, when we come to the New Testament and learn of the divine love, as shown in Christ, we should learn to love God and Christ that we will be able to read the entire New Testament as God's love-letter to us, or as a love-letter from the Father and the Son. Yes, we should even regard the Old Testament as God's love-letter to us, and should study it with delight. Most of us know how we delight to read love-letters which come to us from those we love. We turn from good company in order to read them in secret. We read them so often that we sometimes commit them to memory, even without intending to do so. Our mem-

ories may not be good for other documents, but they retain well the contents of a love letter from one who has a tender hold on our hearts. Thus it has been, thus it is, and thus it will be, in regard to love-letters from human beings that we love. Thus it should be in regard to all mankind in reading the Bible.

SERMON NO. XI

WHAT RELIGION IS RIGHT?

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. James 1:27.

THE word "religion" is from the Latin language, and means a re-binding, binding anew, or binding again. The Greek word translated by the word "religion," in the text that has just been read, means "piety, devotion, or a system of piety and devotion," intended to be a rule of life. Therefore, we may safely conclude that all systems, or orders, of religion, that God has given to man, were intended to bind him back to his God from whom he had strayed by becoming a sinner. All the worship and work, with all other obedience, required of man before he had sinned, were intended to test him, and to hold him in communion with God. All the religious requirements made of him since he became a sinner have been intended to bring him back, and hold him, in submission to God.

By taking the Bible, from beginning to end, we find three religious ages revealed in it. The first of those ages began to be given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and was more fully given to their descendants in later periods of time. The second of those ages was given to the Israelites, or Jews, through their leader, Moses, on Mount Sinai in Arabia. The third of those ages was given first to the Jews, then to the Samari-

tans, and, finally, to the Gentiles, through the apostles of Christ, and certain inspired evangelists. The first age was continued in force about twenty-five hundred years, the second was continued in force about fifteen hundred years, and the third of those ages has been continued in force nearly nineteen hundred years. It will yet be continued over three hundred and fifty years longer, or two thousand and three hundred years from the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in the year seventy of the Gospel Age. See Daniel 8:13, 14.

The first religious age was the period of personal and family religion. Throughout that age every man was a priest for himself, and for his family, if he had a family. Wherever a man pitched his tent to live, or tarried over night, in course of that age, he was permitted to build an altar and to offer on it a sacrifice to God. In view of this the first religious age may be spoken of as the age of *personal and family religion*. As previously stated it continued about twenty-five hundred years.

The second religious age was the age of *national religion*. Personal and family religion was still required, but a change was made in regard to the priesthood, and the place of worship. In this second age the priests were required to be chosen from a special tribe of Israel, and the place for sacrifices to be offered was specially appointed by the Lord. The Israelite was required to be personally pious, and to be pious in his family. But he could not build an altar to offer sacrifices at his own home, nor in any other place, except as the Lord appointed, without going contrary to the divine will. Besides, all sacrifices were required to be offered through the priests that had been divinely appointed. Thus, while the second religion that God gave required

personal and family piety, it required, likewise, a *national worship*. That religion, as was formally stated, continued in force about fifteen hundred years.

Now we are prepared to consider the third religion which God has given to mankind. It is revealed in the New Testament, and is very different from both of the religions that were previously given. It is the period of *church religion* or *congregational worship and work*. All who adopt this religion are required to be pious in their own life, and in their family relations. But, in addition to all this, they are required to unite with others in *public worship, and work*. Besides, they are required to do good to all needy ones. "As we have, therefore, opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Thus Paul teaches in Galatians 6: 10, and then in Titus 2: 12 he declares that this religion teaches us "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." These teachings bring our minds back to the text chosen for this sermon: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Now let us consider what we have thus far learned. First, the Bible reveals a religion in which every man was allowed to be a priest for himself, and for his family, if he had one. That religion continued in force about twenty-five hundred years, and then gave way to the second religion that God gave. The second continued in force about fifteen hundred years, and then gave way to the third religion. The third religion has, at this date, continued in force about eighteen hundred and seventy-five years, and will continue for several

hundred years in the future. The first of these religions was intended to bind man back to his God from whom he wandered when he became a sinner. When that religion had fulfilled the chief purpose for which it was given God gave another religion to take its place. The second religion was also intended to bind man back to his God. When it had fulfilled the chief purpose for which it was given God gave another religion to take its place. This last religion is now in force, and will continue to be till, at least, the chief purpose for which it has been given will have been fulfilled. Then another change will be made.

Now we are prepared to proceed with this subject. In so doing we should consider that during the period of the first religion God required complete obedience to all that he commanded men to do. We should consider, also, that those who were faithful to God were careful to obey the divine commands given to them. Take, for instance, the case of Noah when he was commanded to build the ark. In Genesis 6: 22 we read, "Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him; so did he." As another instance take the case of Abraham when he was commanded to leave his native land and enter the land of Canaan. In Genesis 12: 5 we read, "And into the land of Canaan they came." Paul referred to this in Hebrews 11: 8 when he wrote thus: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went." The same was true when Abraham was required to prepare five different kinds of animals in the day that God made a covenant with him in regard to the land of Canaan. Though Abraham did not understand why God would command him to take those an-

imals, at that time, as recorded in Genesis 15: 9, yet he took them and prepared them, and then awaited God's revelation. These cases, or instances, reveal to us that the first religion was a RELIGION OF OBEDIENCE OR A RELIGION OF DOING. God proposed to bind man anew to him by giving to him certain commands to obey, and when man obeyed those commands he was bound anew to God. It was a religion of BELIEVING, but not of believing ONLY. It required FAITH and the OBEDIENCE OF FAITH. Therefore we read: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith: by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went." See Hebrews 11: 7, 8.

And what may we say of the second religion, commonly spoken of as "the Jewish religion?" In the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus we learn that God instructed Moses to make the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, and the golden candlesticks. In the end of that chapter we learn that God said to him, "And look that thou make them after the pattern which was showed thee in the mount." Then in Exodus 39: 32, 43 we read, "Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they. . . . And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold they had done it: as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them."

Thus far we have learned that the second religion

which God gave to man required strict obedience to his commands. It was a religion of *faith and the obedience of faith*—faith in God and *strict obedience to all his commands*. This will be more evident as we consider the twelfth chapter of Exodus. In that chapter we are informed that the Lord commanded Moses to speak to the children of Israel and command them to take a lamb for every family on the tenth day of the month, and keep it up till the evening of the fourteenth day, and then to kill it, and roast it, and eat it after a certain manner. The Lord commanded, also, that the Israelites take of the blood of that lamb and sprinkle it "on the two side posts and on the upper door posts" of their houses. Moses and the Israelites generally did all this as they were commanded, and the Lord blessed them by causing his destroying angel to pass over their houses when he was sent forth to destroy the firstborn of the Egyptians. Paul referred to this, when writing of Moses in Hebrews 11: 28, saying, "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Here we learn, further, that the second religion which God gave to man was a religion which required *faith and strict obedience*. God could have given his angel charge, as he sent him over Egypt, to keep clear of the houses of the Israelites, without ordering that blood should be placed on the door posts and lintels of their houses. But in his wisdom and goodness he required the Israelites to make use of blood of the passover lamb by putting some of it on those lintels and door posts. As a result obedience was REQUIRED and obedience was RENDERED.

Now let us consider the first part of the tenth chapter of Leviticus. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of

Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." Now, whether we suppose that the Lord had commanded them NOT TO OFFER such fire, or that he had NOT COMMANDED them to make such an offering, the result is the same, as far as the lesson is concerned. *They disobeyed and lost their lives.* In Leviticus 16: 12 we are informed that the high priest was to get fire to burn incense "from off the altar before the Lord," and this implies that all fire to burn incense was to be obtained from the same place. Be this as it may, Nadab and Abihu did that which they were not commanded to do, and they were burned to death by a divine judgment of fire. In offering strange fire before the Lord they did not act by faith, for they could not believe without testimony. And, as God had not given them any testimony in favor of strange fire, they certainly could not believe that they should offer it. This being true they were guilty of the sin of presumption when they made their offering of strange fire, and they were burned to death. Here is further evidence that the Jewish religion was a religion of *faith and the obedience of faith.*

But the time came when that religion was to be "done away" and "abolished." This is evident from 2nd Corinthians 3: 11-13. When was that time? Some suppose it came as soon as John the Baptist began to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Others suppose that it came when Christ began to preach. But the truth is, the Jewish religion continued to be in force throughout the days of John's ministry, also the days of Christ's personal ministry. This is evident from

the fact that Christ spoke of certain laws of that religion as in force. For instance, he said to the man whom he had cleansed of leprosy that he should go and show himself to the Jewish priest and offer the gift that Moses had commanded. See Matthew 8: 1-4. Then he commanded a certain rich man to keep the commandments given by Moses. See Matthew 19: 16-19. Finally, in Matthew 23: 1-8, we are informed that Jesus commanded his disciples to observe that which Moses had commanded. This is further evidence that the Jewish religion was in force during Christ's personal ministry.

When all the evidence on this subject is considered the conclusion will be clear that the Jewish religion was in force till the Holy Spirit was sent down on the day of Pentecost mentioned in the second chapter of Acts. Then, and not till then, were all the types of the Jewish law fulfilled in Christ. Not till Christ had ascended, and had entered heaven, with his own blood, was the high priest's yearly atonement for the people of Israel fulfilled. This is evident to all who read aright the ninth chapter of Hebrews. And, not till the Holy Spirit was sent down, on the mentioned Pentecost, was the prophecy in Joel 2: 28-31 fulfilled. But that prophecy pertained to the Jewish religion, but had promises in it in regard to the gospel religion. See Acts 2: 16-20.

In view of all this we can clearly see that the Jewish religion, and the gospel teaching, lapped in their relations to each other. According as the former was FULFILLED by John the Baptist, and by the Savior, the latter was INTRODUCED by them. In other words, they fulfilled the second religious age, and they introduced the third. But whether they were engaged in fulfilling the Jewish religion, or were introducing the gospel re-

ligion, they taught *faith and the obedience of faith*. This is evident from the third chapter of Matthew, the first chapter of Mark, and from all else that is set forth in the records of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And this is the truth that we need specially to consider. Each of the three religions, which God gave to man, was intended to bind man anew, or bind him back, to his God. The plan of binding him was, in each instance, summed up in teaching *faith and the obedience of faith*. Each of these religions differs, in some respects, from the others, yet each of them required *faith in God and strict obedience to his commands*. The third of these religions is still in force, and will continue to be till the end of time. Besides requiring faith in God it requires faith in Christ as the Son of God, and *strict obedience to his will as set forth in the gospel*.

Now we are prepared to consider again the words of the text chosen for this sermon. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Here we are informed that the religion which is "pure and undefiled before God" is a LIFE—is something to LIVE—something to DO. And this is in perfect harmony with all that has been set forth in regard to the first and second religions, or religious ages, which God gave to man. They were both summed up in *doing the divine will*.

But here a question arises. May we not "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," without being converted to Christ, and thus without being Christians? Yes, we may visit such, and all afflicted ones—we may be kind to all classes of needy ones—without being Christians. We may do good to mankind, gener-

ally, for our own glory, or simply because we like to make mankind happy, and yet not be converted to Christ. This needs only to be stated in order to be admitted.

Now another question arises. May we keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" without being converted to Christ, and thus without being Christians? No. This is IMPOSSIBLE. For, until we become converted to Christ, so as to become Christians, we are OF THE WORLD, and BELONG TO THE WORLD. Therefore, while in that condition we cannot keep ourselves "unspotted from the world."

But what does the New Testament religion require of mankind in order to convert them, or bring them from the world, so that they may keep themselves "unspotted from the world?" In order to find the New Testament answer to this question we need to go back to the Savior's world-wide commission to his apostles. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." See Matthew 28: 19, 20. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," or condemned. See Mark 16: 15, 16. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." See Luke 24: 46, 47. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when

he had said this he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." See John 20: 21-23.

In these four accounts of the world-wide commission, which Christ gave to his apostles, we may learn that he intended to make obedient believers of mankind. In other words, he intended that his chosen ones should "teach all nations," and in so doing should "preach the gospel to every creature," or to every responsible human being. Besides, he intended that by such preaching of the gospel mankind should become BELIEVERS in him, and then, as believers in him, that they should OBEY him. Then in obeying him he intended that they should REPENT and be BAPTIZED, and that this should be done in order that the obedient ones should have "remission of sins," or be "saved" from their past sins. In perfect harmony with this we learn that when the apostles began to preach under the world-wide commission which Christ gave to them, and a great company became heart pierced, and wished to know what they should do, they were commanded thus: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." All this, and more, was preached under the world-wide commission, or charge, which was intended to be made known to all the world, and, thus, to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Notice, the Savior said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In the light of this we MUST CONCLUDE that the preaching which is recorded in the second chapter of Acts was

done under the world-wide commission, which was intended to benefit *Gentiles as well as Jews*.

But that in which we are now interested, in a special manner, is that the New Testament religion is a religion of *believing and obeying*. All who become partakers of it must believe in Christ wholeheartedly, and, as believers, they must repent, and, then, as penitent believers, they must be baptized with water baptism. Before their baptism they must confess their faith in Christ, as did the man of Ethiopia, of whom we read in the latter part of the eighth chapter of Acts. This is the divine plan by which the Lord calls those, who would become his people, *out of the world*, and turns them "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith" that is in Christ. See Acts 26: 18. When persons have thus been called *out of the world*, or *separated* from the world, then they are converted to Christ in spirit, soul, and body—are converted in mind, heart, life, profession, and relationship. When they are thus converted they are members of the church of Christ, and we should remember that the word for "church," as found in the Bible, means "called out," or separated. Therefore those who are "called out" from the world by obedience to the gospel of Christ are members of the church of Christ. And, having become members of that church they are required to live the religion which is "pure and undefiled before God."

When we talk to some people in this manner they are disposed to inquire why we do not say something about *getting religion*. To all such we may safely say that the doctrine of *getting religion* is not found in the Bible, except in the sense of getting a book that sets

forth a religion. For instance, when we get a copy of the Bible we get three religions, and when we get a copy of the New Testament we get a part of the Jewish religion, and all of the gospel religion in its facts, commands, and promises. In THEORY or TEACHING we may GET a religion, and then in PRACTICE we may LIVE a religion. This is the only sense in which any one may GET a religion. The idea that persons may pray until God GIVES religion to them, and that religion is something to GET and LOSE, as often as persons may earnestly seek for it, is *wholly untrue*. It is not set forth in the Bible, either Old Testament or New.

But do not earnest seekers sometimes *get something*? Yes, they *get deceived*. Their instructors ask them if they do not "feel better" than they did, and when they say, yes, then those instructors tell them that they have "got religion" or that the Lord has "pardoned" them, or that they are "saved." Those who believe such instruction very naturally become very happy. We say "naturally," because they are seeking salvation, and, as soon as they break down in their rebellion against God, and surrender their wills wholly to Christ, they *very naturally* feel better than they did while they were in rebellion against him. Thus there are two natural results in every instance of turning from sin with the intention of becoming a Christian. The first is that when the sinner begins to turn from sin, and surrenders his will to do the will of Christ, he, naturally, feels better than he did when he was in rebellion against that will. The second natural result is that the penitent sinner feels very happy when he is told that he is pardoned, and believes what he is told on that subject.

Now we are prepared to make a very serious charge

against many preachers and certain others who work with them. They teach that *better feelings*, or *happy feelings*, are the evidence of pardon of sins, instead of teaching that the *divine assurance* as set forth in the New Testament is the evidence of such pardon. They do not teach such obedience as will bring the penitent sinner to the position and condition in which the divine sentence of pardon is pronounced. But they STOP the penitent sinner in course of his obedience, and inquire about his FEELINGS, and if they are informed by him that he FEELS better, then they tell him that his FEELINGS are evidence that he is pardoned. Next they tell him that water baptism is not necessary to his salvation because he *feels better* or *feels happy without being baptized*.

All such teaching is wrong. Those who do it presume to step in between the penitent sinner and Christ, and they tell the sinner that he is saved before Christ does. Christ says, "He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved." But they say, "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved." Again, Christ says, through the Apostle Paul, "You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you: being then made free from sin you became the servants of righteousness." But they say, "You don't need to obey any FORM of doctrine in order to be saved: only BELIEVE and you shall be saved."

Certainly all those who do the kind of teaching that has just been exposed are very dangerous persons. They contradict the Savior and the Apostle Paul. They mislead multitudes of sincere persons who wish to know what they shall do to be saved, and confuse them. They advocate a false doctrine when they teach that the feelings, or emotions, should be regarded as the

proper evidence of pardon, and they prevent those who receive their instruction from obeying the gospel in its fullness. In so doing they prevent them from receiving the divine evidence of pardon, and from rejoicing in the full assurance of faith. When they contradict the Savior they do that which Peter did on a certain occasion, and they deserve to be spoken to as the Savior spoke to Peter. See Matthew 16: 21-23. They deserve to be condemned even as Peter was on the mentioned occasion. They have placed themselves on the side of Satan who contradicted God when he spoke to our mother Eve. They are on the devil's territory, and deserve to be told of it. They may intend to be good men, but they are deceivers, and they are preventing multitudes of honest persons from obeying Christ in the fullness of his teaching. They instruct those under their influence to "get religion" but do not instruct them to obey *the gospel* in its fullness. They teach that the evidence of religion is a happy feeling, and when penitent sinners have such a feeling they are told that they are saved. But all such teaching is in addition to the word of God; is contrary to that word; and brings those who accept it, as well as those who do it, into the greatest danger. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," is the Savior's warning in regard to the danger of teaching and receiving false doctrines. See Matthew 15: 14. Therefore we should all dread and shun false doctrines, and accept with strictness all that the Savior requires of us in order that we may become Christians, live Christians, and die Christians.

Now we are prepared to give the text chosen for this sermon a final examination. As we have learned, the Apostle James declared, "Pure religion and unde-

filed before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The reference here made to the "fatherless and widows" implies that they are the most needy ones—they sometimes need earthward help, and always need all the compassion that others can bestow. But "pure religion" does not end here. Paul says, "As we have, therefore, opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith." The most needy ones are the first that should have our attention, and all other needy ones should afterwards receive attention. The general requirement, therefore, is, *Do good to all the needy ones*. This is the first part of the life that "pure religion and undefiled before God" requires of those who are Christians. In order that all Christians, regardless of their natural disposition, may be humble enough, and good enough to do good to all needy ones they must read the Bible and pray to God daily. They need to live in close communion with God and Christ, and consider with care the Savior's example in regard to the poor. This is necessary in order to overcome the pride and selfishness that are often found in the human heart, and sometimes lurk in those who have obeyed the gospel.

But how may Christians keep themselves unspotted from the world? May they do so by drinking with the drinkers, and smoking with the smokers, and joking with the jokers, and swearing with the swearers, and lying with the liars, and playing with the players, and pitching with those who pitch horseshoes? To ask this question is to answer it in the negative. How then may they show that they are keeping themselves unspotted from the world? May they do so by using

swear-words, or vulgar words, over the signature of other persons by repeating such words as others have used them? No. We need not to argue that question. May we show that we are "unspotted from the world" by reading novels and worldly newspapers instead of reading the Bible? Or, may it be done by turning from the meeting of the church on the Lord's day, and going on an excursion, or to a birthday dinner, or by going to meeting but refusing to give as we have been prospered? Or, may it be done by going to a dance, or to a theater, or by playing cards? Certainly we may say, No, to all such questions. *All such practices must be rejected.*

But may we be crooked in business, or critical, and fault-finding, in the family, or contemptible in the social circle, or double dealing in politics, and yet keep ourselves unspotted from the world? Again we may say that we need not to argue such a question. It suggests its own answer. If we are guilty of any kind of crookedness, or unjust conduct, or double-dealing, or foolishness, we are *not keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.*

On the contrary, all those who would keep themselves unspotted from the world must cease to be worldlings. This must be done by a wholehearted faith, a wholehearted repentance, a wholehearted confession, and a wholehearted baptism. Such a baptism must be a WHOLE baptism, or a baptism of the WHOLE PERSON, and must, therefore, be a burial and a resurrection—a burial in water and a resurrection from it. See Romans 6: 42; Colossians 2: 12. When this has been accomplished, then a pure life must be lived—a life of unselfish devotion toward others, especially toward the needy ones. Finally, all wicked practices,

all ungodly practices, and even all practices which have the "appearance of evil," *must be avoided*.

"Abhor that which is evil," and "Abstain from all appearance of evil." See Romans 12: 9; 1st Thessalonians 5: 22. Here are two commands which *must be observed* by all who would keep themselves "unspotted from the world." The conclusion then is this: In order to live the religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father mankind need to become *wholehearted Christians*, and, thereby, cease to be worldlings. Then they must live the life of *wholehearted Christians* in doing good to needy ones, and in abhorring evil, and in abstaining from all appearance of evil. Such as do all this, and only such, are living the religion that is *pure and undefiled before God and the Father*.

SERMON NO. XII

WHAT SPIRIT OR DISPOSITION IS RIGHT BEFORE GOD?

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5: 3.

IN order for us to understand this saying of our Savior it is necessary to consider the occasion on which it was spoken. Christ had been baptized of John the Baptist in the river Jordan. He had been declared by John to be "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and declared, by a voice from heaven, to be the "beloved Son" in whom the Father was "well pleased." He had been "in the wilderness forty days; tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts." He had suffered hunger to the utmost; had defeated Satan by repeating parts of his Father's book; and then had been "ministered unto" by angels. He had begun to preach the gospel of the kingdom; had commenced to work miracles; and, as a result, had begun to gather great multitudes of people about him. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set [had sat down], his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

When the Savior thus addressed his disciples he must have spoken in the hearing of the multitude that was about him, for in the end of the seventh chapter of

this record we may read, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." We need only to state that the people could not have been "astonished" at the Savior's doctrine if they had not heard it. Therefore He must have spoken in their hearing.

In that multitude of people which heard the Savior's sayings, when he preached his Sermon on the Mount, various classes of the Jews were likely represented. We may safely conclude, thus, from the variety of sayings which He uttered on that occasion. Proud Pharisees were likely there, and cold Sadducees; jealous Herodians were likely there, and conceited scribes; pale cheeks and wasted age were likely there—persons from whose lives the burdens had never once been lifted, and to whom a great man had, perhaps, never spoken a kind word. What comfort the Savior's words must have given to the poor in spirit who heard him when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" At the same time, what rebuke those words must have given to all of His hearers who were self-sufficient in spirit, and thus did not have the promise of the kingdom of heaven!

Here we should consider the meaning of the expression, "poor in spirit," and why the Savior said of the "poor in spirit," that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The meaning of *poorness of spirit* is the opposite of *self-sufficiency of spirit*. Only those who have become "poor in spirit" have felt the importance of becoming Christians. All who have continued to be self-sufficient in spirit have refused to become Christians. The one condition of mind and heart which is always necessary to a wholehearted obedience to the gospel is *poorness of*

spirit, and the one condition of mind and heart which is always in opposition to a wholehearted obedience to the gospel is *self-sufficiency of spirit*. All who belong to the former class feel their need of Christ, while those who belong to the latter class do not feel their need of him.

Now let us consider poorness of spirit through an illustration. In the last part of the sixth chapter of John's record of the gospel we learn that many of Christ's disciples went back and walked no more with him. They had followed Him for a time, and seemed willing to receive some of his teachings. But when He referred to the communion, and declared that they would need to eat his flesh and drink his blood, they said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Next we are informed that from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with him. This shows that they had limited themselves in regard to His teaching, or, at least, that they were not willing to receive all his teaching. The same is true of many who now profess to be Christ's followers. They seem to think that some of His requirements are "hard" sayings, and they are disposed to reject them as non-essentials to salvation.

But what did the Savior do, or say, with reference to those who turned back from him? He let them go, and turning to those who were chosen to be his apostles he inquired of them whether they also would go away. Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." That is to say, Simon Peter did not know any other master who would be so kind and true, nor any other teacher who would be so wise and good. He did not know any other who could speak to him the

words of eternal life as Jesus had spoken them. Therefore he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" When Peter thus spoke he must have been poor in spirit, for he must have regarded himself as bound up and bound down, bound in and bound under, to the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life. Here, therefore, is an illustration of poorness of spirit, and this shows why Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It shows that those who are poor in spirit believe Christ to be their Savior, and their ONLY Savior. They believe that his plan for saving them is the ONLY plan—his gospel is the ONLY gospel, his church the ONLY church, and his name the ONLY name. Thus believing, they are not disposed to try some other plan, or gospel, or church, or name. Now we can understand why Jesus said, and why he could say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In other words, He declared that the kingdom of heaven was of them because they were poor in spirit, and, thus, would be satisfied to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven in the Lord's *own appointed way*. Besides, the Savior knew that those who would be poor in spirit would not teach, nor even think, that mankind could be saved without being citizens of that kingdom.

Now we are ready to consider poorness of spirit through another illustration. A man may pretend to be a beggar. He may be clad in a beggar's garments, may tell a beggar's story, may assume a beggar's tone of voice, and to all appearances he may seem to be a beggar. But if that man has a five-dollar bill in his pocket he cannot feel like the genuine beggar, for he feels that he has something of his own on which he can depend. He feels that he will not need to starve, even

if those whom he asks for something to eat do not give to him. But suppose that after he has tried in vain to get something to eat at a dozen places, or more, he becomes discouraged or disgusted, and goes to a grocery to buy something to eat. Suppose that when he puts his five-dollar bill on the counter of the groceryman he is told that it is a counterfeit. He might then try a second, or a third, groceryman. Suppose that each one would tell him the same, and that the last of them would advise him to take his bill to the cashier of a bank, and learn, for a certainty, that his bill is a counterfeit. Suppose that by taking such advice he would be convinced that it is indeed a counterfeit, then, and not till then, would he feel like a genuine beggar, and be poor in spirit, if that would be all he could claim in the form of money. This needs only to be stated in order to be understood and admitted by all who think aright. To this we may add, that it is a humiliation to any one for his money to be handed back to him with the declaration, "That is a counterfeit." But to one who does not have any other money it means despair as well as humiliation.

Now we are prepared to apply the illustration which we have been considering. A man may pretend to be a follower of Christ, and to all outward appearances may be such. He may sing religious songs, and whistle religious tunes, and pray long and loud prayers. But suppose that he has accepted a religion which is not from heaven, yet he thinks it is all right. Can he feel poor in spirit before Christ? Can he feel wholly dependent on the gospel of Christ for salvation? To ask these questions is to answer them in the negative. While a man feels that he has something else on which he can depend he certainly cannot feel poor in spirit.

And now we can understand why certain religious people cannot be made to feel poor in spirit—sufficiently poor to depend wholly on the gospel of Christ for salvation. They have been led to accept a human creed, and to depend on it as their religious guide. The leading men of one of those creeds address the members of the church who accept it thus: "We esteem it our duty and privilege most earnestly to recommend to *you*, as members of our church, our FORM OF DISCIPLINE, which has been founded on the experience of a long series of years, as also on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern churches." Notice, those leading men, called bishops, do not say that their "form of discipline" has been founded on the Bible, nor on any part of the Bible. But they say it has been founded on "the experience of a long series of years, as also on the observations and remarks" which they had made "on ancient and modern churches." Now suppose that a man depends on such a "form of discipline," and is a member of a church that is governed by such a discipline, and not by the New Testament, is he not depending upon a *counterfeit religion*? And is he not liable to learn when it is too late that such a discipline, and such a church, are not genuine, and will not be accepted by the Judge of all the earth? To ask these questions is to answer them in the affirmative. Besides, how dreadful is the thought of depending on such a creed, and on such a church, and, thereby, refusing to become poor enough to depend wholly on the gospel of Christ, and on the church of Christ, till too late to repent! Scribes, Pharisees, and other sects of the Jews, were depending on their humanisms, rather than on the word of God, when the Savior spoke his Sermon on the Mount. In view of this, and all others who would

follow their example, as well as to console the humble, the Savior said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

But there are other applications which may be justly made of the illustration we have considered. Suppose that a beggar has a dozen forms of five-dollar bills. If one of them would be handed back to him, because it is a counterfeit, he might suppose that the others might be genuine, or, at least, that one of them might be genuine. With such a supposition in his mind he might feel some degree of confidence. Besides, he might hope to find some one who would not be any better acquainted with money than he is. As a result he might find some one who would take such a bill, or take every one of his bills. But that fact would not make those bills genuine, nor cause the government to accept them. Neither will the fact that millions accept counterfeit religions make them acceptable to God. The government of any country is not likely to be deceived by counterfeits of the money that it sends forth, and certainly God will not be deceived by counterfeits of the religion that he has sent forth. This being true, we should not deceive ourselves by such counterfeits, nor refuse to become "poor in spirit" on account of confidence in them.

In view of all that has been brought before us on this subject we can now understand why many persons who are not church members refuse to be made poor in spirit. Some of them have joined secret orders that have a form of religion connected with them. As a result they depend upon that form of religion, and refuse to become sufficiently "poor in spirit" to obey the gospel. Others of those who are not members of any church depend on their morality to save them, and they

refuse to be "poor in spirit." Then there are others who depend on their good deeds, or charity, to save them, and, as a result, cannot be made to feel "poor in spirit." Many of those who are not connected with any church depend on their education, their health, or their wealth, for happiness in this world, and will, on that account, risk themselves in disobedience, by refusing to become "poor in spirit." They feel as if they have something else than the gospel on which to depend. If sick persons, or those who are old, or poor in purse, obey the gospel they seem to think that their obedience is appropriate. Those who are sick, or old, they seem to think may not live much longer, and so it is all right for such to prepare for death. Then if persons who are poor in purse become religious the rich seem to think that such poor persons act in a becoming manner because they have not much else on which to depend for enjoyment. A lady of more than ordinary intelligence once said of a very poor woman who had become religious, "We thought it very appropriate for her to come into the church, as she had so few of the comforts of this life." This implied that if she had been a woman of more favorable circumstances her obedience to the gospel would not have been so appropriate! That lady's statement, with all that it implied, is an index to a common condition of mind among mankind, and it is in direct opposition to poorness of spirit. The Savior knew this, and, therefore, began his Sermon on the Mount by saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity." This is an old saying which was arranged by some uninspired one. But it is in perfect harmony with this saying of our Savior: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs

is the kingdom of heaven." On this principle God has dealt with mankind in all ages. When man has not known what to do in the time of distress, or danger, then God has often been pleased to show his power as man's friend. This has been true in God's dealings with his own people, and sometimes in his dealings with others. See the hundred and seventh Psalm.

Take, for instance, the case of ancient Jacob. When he had fled from the face of his brother, Esau, and was on his way to a place called Padan-Aram, he found the distance greater than he could cover in a single day. "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." See Genesis 28: 11. When Jacob laid himself down that night to sleep he must have felt poorer in spirit than he had ever felt before. His father's wealth was behind him, and he did not know that he would ever receive any part of it. What was before him he did not know. That was the time of his extremity, and it was God's opportunity to make a glorious revelation to him. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it: and behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed: and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed: and, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again

into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Certainly Jacob's extremity was God's opportunity. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not: and he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The same was true of the Prophet Elijah. In the nineteenth chapter of the first book of Kings we learn that Elijah was discouraged, and said to the Lord concerning backslidden Israel, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." That was his extremity and it was God's opportunity to tell him to anoint a certain man, named Hazael, to be king over Syria, and another named Jehu, to be king over Israel, and then to anoint a man, named Elisha, to be prophet in his stead. To this the Lord added, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal." "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be. The Book of Esther offers to us a splendid illustration of this doctrine. When the death of the Jews in Persia had been ordered by a decree, which could not be reversed, they were certainly in their extremity. And the record shows that their extremity was God's opportunity. He caused their chief enemy to be slain, and they were saved.

Now we should return to the New Testament. The Savior said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And we can now under-

stand his reason for making use of that saying. We can understand, likewise, why he used it in the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount. If we consider that sermon aright, in its bearings on former religious ages, on Christ's personal ministry, and on the fullness of the Gospel Age, we shall be convinced that it is the greatest speech that was ever delivered on earth. Yet when we consider aright the first sentence of that speech we shall be convinced that it was the best that could have been used. The Savior knew that mankind would only be disposed to accept him as their Savior in proportion as they would become "poor in spirit." He knew that they would be disposed to turn from him, and trifle with his gospel, until they would become "poor in spirit." Therefore, he began his sermon by saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Now we are prepared to consider several instances of obedience to the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, mentioned in the second chapter of Acts, a great company became heart-pierced by reason of the gospel which they had heard. Those of that company, who felt constrained to do so, said to the Apostle Peter, and to the other apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" By that question they implied that they did not know what they should do, but that the apostles did know, and that they were willing to do what the apostles would tell them. This implies that they were "poor in spirit." They felt that they would need to do something to be saved from their sins. This, at least, was the idea that the Apostle Peter received from their question, for he answered them thus: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift

of the Holy Ghost." See Acts 2: 38. In the forty-first verse of that same chapter we are informed that, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In other words, they obeyed the gospel, and were, thereby, "born of water and of the Spirit," and entered "the kingdom of God" which is "the kingdom of heaven." In them this scripture was then fulfilled: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

What was true of the heart-pierced Jews on the day of Pentecost, mentioned in Acts second chapter, was true of Saul of Tarsus when "he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Saul, thereby, implied that he did not know what he should do, also that the Lord did know, and that he was willing to do whatever the Lord would tell him. This means that he felt "poor in spirit," and we may learn by reading the record of his obedience to Christ that he felt sufficient poorness of spirit to do what the Lord commanded him to do. For when the Lord, through a certain disciple named Ananias, said to him, "Arise and be baptized," he "arose and was baptized." See Acts 22: 16, 9: 18. By thus obeying Christ he entered the kingdom of heaven, and in him was fulfilled the saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The record of the Ethiopian's conversion, as offered to us in Acts eighth chapter, is another illustration of the words of our text. Yes, and the case of the Eunuch illustrates the Fourth Beatitude, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The Eunuch, whose conversion we are considering, had been to Jerusalem to worship according

to the Jewish law. He was numbered with that class of worshipers, spoken of as "proselytes," for he was not only "a man of Ethiopia," as the Common Version of the Sacred Text declares, but he was "an Ethiopian man," as the Greek text clearly indicates. After having worshipped in Jerusalem he was returning in his chariot to his benighted country, and, instead of spending his time in talking to the driver of his chariot, or in looking over the country, he spent it, in part at least, in reading the Jewish scriptures. He was poor in spirit, religiously, and desired to know more of the God whom he had learned to worship as the only true God. And God was not unmindful of him, but by his angel directed a certain preacher of Christ to go in a certain direction. As a result that preacher was permitted to preach Jesus to that Ethiopian, and, as he was "poor in spirit" he accepted what he heard, believed it, confessed his faith, and was baptized. Moreover, because he was "poor in spirit" he humbled himself to go "down into the water" to be baptized, and after coming "up out of the water" he "went on his way rejoicing." Yes, the conversion of the Eunuch illustrates the text, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The same is true of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, as recorded in Acts ninth and twenty-second chapters. Saul was on his way to a certain city called Damascus, and with the intention of persecuting the Christians whom he could find there. But the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a light "above the brightness of the sun," and spoke to him declaring that he was the one whom Saul was persecuting. "And he, trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When he thus inquired of the Lord he was "poor in

spirit," for such inquiry implied that he did not know what he should do, that the Lord did know, and that he was willing to do what the Lord would require of him. Accordingly, when the Lord sent a preacher to him, and that preacher said to him, "Arise and be baptized" he "arose, and was baptized." Because he was "poor in spirit" he was ready and willing to do all that the Lord required of him. He did not regard baptism as beneath his dignity, but he humbled himself, and was buried with Christ "by baptism" and "in baptism." See Romans 6: 4; Colossians 2: 12. Thus the record of his conversion sets forth an illustration of the doctrine, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In the tenth chapter of the book of Acts of the Apostles is another illustration of that doctrine. A man named Cornelius, a soldier in the Roman army at a place called Cæsarea, which was the political capital of Palestine at the time that the gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, is mentioned in that chapter. The man was a Jewish proselyte, or one who was of heathen birth but had learned to worship the true God according to the Jewish law. The record given of him shows that he was an excellent man, and a devoted worshipper of God. But he had not obeyed the gospel of Christ, and, therefore, was not a Christian. Yet he was "poor in spirit," and, for that reason, he was willing to learn more of the divine will. To him the Lord sent an angel to inform him of the acceptance of his prayers and deeds of mercy, and to command him to send to a certain place for a certain preacher who should tell him what he ought to do, and thus tell him "words" whereby he and his house should be saved. See Acts 10: 6, 11: 14.

Cornelius obeyed the command given to him, and, in due time, the preacher referred to came to him. As a result he heard the gospel of Christ preached, he believed it, and obeyed it. But before he had completed his obedience, or had even heard all the "words" that were intended to be spoken to him, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner upon him, and others with him. The evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in him and others with him, on that occasion, was that the gift of tongues was bestowed on them, for they could speak other languages, and magnify God in speaking them. The purpose that the Lord had in view when he bestowed the gift of tongues on that occasion, was to convince unbelievers who were there, or might afterwards learn of what was done there. See 1st Corinthians 14: 22. But the visit of God's angel to Cornelius, the assurance which he received from that angel, and the gift of tongues by the Holy Spirit, were not sufficient to prevent him from being "poor in spirit." He did not rely on his bright experience, and, on that account, refuse to hear and obey all that God still required of him. But when the preacher saw that Cornelius was certainly a gospel subject he commanded him "to be baptized in the name of the Lord." And the baptism commanded on that occasion was "water" baptism, for the preacher, in referring to it, inquired, "Who can forbid water that these should not be baptized?" But, though it was water baptism, yet Cornelius did not get angry about it, for, after all that he was required to do, he "prayed," or earnestly requested, Peter and certain others "to tarry certain days." On the contrary, he was poor in spirit, and his case, as set forth in the record referred to, is another illustration of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, "Blessed are the

poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In conclusion we may refer to the case of the Philippian jailer, as recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. He had been commanded to keep Paul and Silas "safely." And, "having received such a command thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God." Then there was an earthquake, and the prison doors were opened, and every prisoner's bands were loosed. Then the jailer, awakening out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors opened he supposed that the prisoners had all fled, and then he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called unto him in a loud voice, and said, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." "Then he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Thus that jailer showed himself to be "poor in spirit." Some have supposed that he wished to know how to be saved from death, to which they suppose he was liable, because the doors of the jail had been opened, and the prisoners might have escaped.

But Paul was a discerner of spirits and knew the jailer's thoughts on that subject. For many days he and Silas had been declared in the city of Philippi to be the servants of the most high God who showed the way of salvation. We are informed of this in the seventeenth verse of this chapter. In view of this we need not to enter any supposition on this subject, but should accept the jailer's question in its most evident meaning. By the earthquake, and all else that occurred at that time, he became impressed that he had need of the salvation which Paul and his companion preached.

They told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he should be saved, likewise the members of his household. He then did what he could to relieve them of their sufferings, then he obeyed Christ in baptism.

The city of Philippi was built near a river. See eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth verses of this chapter, and if jails were then built near the best drainage, as they now are, in many instances, then the distance to the river was not great. Be this as it may, the jailer and his family were baptized in the usual manner which was by a burial. That manner is indicated in Romans 6: 4; Colossians 2: 12. The jailer was "poor in spirit," and his obedience to Christ illustrates the doctrine, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And what more may we say? All obedience—humble, wholehearted obedience—illustrates the same doctrine. Only as persons are "poor in spirit," so that they believe that Christ is their *ONLY* Savior, are they disposed to obey him without trying to be saved by some plan that he never required.

Nor is this all. Only as believers are convinced that the church which Christ died to establish is the *ONLY* church that is safe are they disposed to be poor in spirit on the church question. The same is true of all other questions that pertain to man's spiritual welfare.

Therefore, we should all study the Bible, especially the New Testament, so as to learn our own weakness, and our dependence on Christ, and on his gospel, for salvation. By so doing we shall all become "poor in spirit," and, then, by remaining "poor in spirit" till death we shall learn fully and forever the meaning of the saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

SERMON NO. XIII

INFALLIBILITY IN RELIGION

To whom He showed himself alive after his passion [sufferings] by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Acts 1: 3.

GOD has always desired that mankind shall be peaceful and happy in this world, as well as in the world to come. For that reason He has always desired that they should obey him, for he knows that peace and happiness are not found in disobedience to his commands. To His ancient people he said, when they were living in opposition to his will, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been like a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah 48: 18.) Even when God's people have been persecuted by their enemies, and afflicted with other trials, yet they have had the privilege of being peaceful and happy in their relation to him. The Apostle Peter wrote to certain Christians when they were "in heaviness through manifold temptations," and yet declared that they rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." See 1st Peter 1: 5-8.

But God knows that mankind cannot be happy while they are in doubt. He knows that doubt and happiness do not belong together. On the contrary, they are opposed to each other. If a man is in doubt about his

health, or the health of any one that is dear to him, he cannot be happy when he is at liberty to think of his doubt. In some instances his doubt may be such as to oppress him at all times while he is awake, and even to disturb his sleep. The same is true if he is in doubt about his friends, about his title to his home, the foundation that is under his house, or anything else that may deeply concern his welfare. On the same principle, if man is in doubt about his religion, or in relation to his religion, then he must be unhappy. The Lord knew all this, and for this reason he has given to man every possible evidence that the religion he has offered to him is settled and solid, constant and true.

The first evidence that God has given to mankind of his own constancy and goodness is to be seen in external nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Thus David wrote in Psalm 19: 1, and this is an index to all that may be daily seen in the heavens. The sun, the moon, and the stars, in their calm and mysterious constancy, and benefit to mankind, clearly show that God is constant and good. The same is true of the earth in its constancy, and in the boundaries of the waters. "Hitherto shalt thou come but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Thus God spoke to the great deep, as he declared in Job 38: 11, and in that speech to Job we find another index to God's constancy and goodness.

But here are other evidences. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." That speech to Noah, as recorded in Genesis 8: 22, bears in the same direction, for the facts in nature are in harmony with that speech. Thus we find,

in this material world, constant and striking evidence that God is steadfast in his earthward purposes. This should cause mankind to believe that He is steadfast in all that he has said to them in regard to religion, and should inspire full confidence in him. We are not in doubt about the rising of tomorrow's sun, nor about the increasing and decreasing of the moon, nor about the constancy of the stars. Neither are we in doubt about the seasons of the year, though they often differ from each other in length and intenseness. By reason of their differences we may have discomfort, but we do not have doubt about their return from year to year. All these evidences are considerations which should prepare us to think aright of God's care over us in regard to religion.

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Thus wrote David in Psalm 119: 89, and here is an index to the constancy of the Bible. It is God's written word, and its constancy is assured by the statement that it is *forever settled in heaven*. Besides, its constancy is assured to us by its continued existence on earth. Haters of the Bible have arisen, and have tried to overthrow it, but still it remains. A nation has sometimes arisen in opposition to it, yet it is not destroyed. "I am tired hearing the statement that twelve men established Christianity on the earth: I will show that one man is sufficient to banish it from the earth." Thus spoke a noted infidel. But his books are now seldom seen, while the Bible is in nearly every home in all lands that are not heathenish. The Old Book remains, regardless of the rage of its enemies. It indicates God's constancy and goodness.

But the text selected for this sermon sets forth a special reason why we should have the peace and hap-

piness which results from the full assurance of faith. The fact that Christ appeared to his chosen witnesses, after his sufferings, by "many infallible," or unerring, "proofs" is special evidence that God desires the happiness of mankind. He knew that the truth of the Bible would depend on the divinity of Christ, and that the divinity of Christ would depend on his resurrection from the dead. Knowing this He arranged that Christ should appear alive to his chosen witnesses by many proofs which would be certain beyond all question, and therefore would be "infallible." For this reason Christ did not appear to them only once or twice, but many times, and through a period of forty days. Neither did He appear to them in the twilight, nor in a room where darkness prevented them from seeing him with plainness. But in the open daylight He appeared to them, in the public highway, at a table, by the seaside, and at other times, and places, when his chosen witnesses could see him, and assure themselves that he was the very one they had known before his death. The fact that those witnesses became fully assured that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, and that, with scarcely an exception, they all suffered death for the testimony they bore in regard to his resurrection, should settle this question. *Christ's resurrection from the dead has been attested by the life's blood of many witnesses.*

Does anyone suppose that those witnesses were all deluded, and suffered death by reason of a delusion, even as heathen do who give themselves up to death, and give of their children to death, to appease the imaginary wrath of an imaginary god? If so, we may answer that the devotion of the heathen is *contrary to reason*. It is the result of a confidence which may be just-

ly called SUPERSTITION, since it is without testimony that is reasonable. An account of the lack of reason found in heathenism is found in Isaiah forty-fourth chapter, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of that chapter, where mention is made of an image that is made of a tree, also of the folly of him who makes it, and regards it as worthy of worship. God says, "He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me for thou art my god."

Here is a description of idolatry which shows that reason, as well as intelligent faith, is rejected by the heathen. Therefore his devotion is not to be compared with that of the Christian. Such devotion is wholly based on SUPERSTITION, and *rejects all that is reasonable*, while the Christian's devotion is founded on an INTELLIGENT FAITH after he has considered SOLID TESTIMONY by the aid of his best reason. More than that the devotion of the chosen witnesses who died for their testimony, that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, was founded on KNOWLEDGE. They KNEW that He had been raised because he had appeared to them, after his resurrection, "by many infallible proofs," through a period of "forty days." The resurrection of Christ was therefore as well attested as any fact could have been by human witnesses, divinely chosen, and divinely qualified.

But this is not the end. Christ established three monuments of his resurrection,—WATER BAPTISM, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK as a day for worship, and

THE LORD'S SUPPER, or communion, on the first day of the week. Men select the hardest stone, or other durable material of which to build monuments. But Jesus Christ chose to build one of an immersion in water followed by an emersion from it—a burial in baptism followed by a resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Again: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Here are two declarations, as found in Romans 6: 4, and Colossians 2: 12, in which baptism is connected with the resurrection of Christ. In view of this we may safely say that water baptism, when scripturally performed, by a single burial, followed by a resurrection, is a monument of the resurrection of Christ which cannot be destroyed. It is, therefore, an infallible proof that He was raised from the dead, and this is the crowning miracle of the gospel which proves his divinity. Infidels admit that Jesus lived, and that he was crucified, also that his body was buried. But they deny that He was raised because to admit his resurrection would be to admit that he was what he professed to be. Yet His resurrection is declared in water baptism, when scripturally performed, and this means that he was and is the Son of God in the special sense which he declared while among men.

Then the first day of the week, as a day for religious worship, is another monument of Christ's resurrection. The Jews worshipped on the seventh day, and the Samaritans were disposed to imitate them, while the heathen had their special days for worship. But

Christians met on the first day of the week to break bread as a religious act, as we may learn by reading Acts 20: 7. This continued till Christians so increased in number in the Roman empire that, in the Fourth Century, the first day was declared to be the day that should be generally regarded as the day for worship by professed Christians.

Now let us consider the beginning of divine testimony concerning the resurrection of Christ as a fact. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." This testimony, as recorded in Matthew 28: 1-7, is an index to Acts 20: 7 in which we are informed that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread, as a religious act. Thus the day, and the act of breaking bread on that day, may be regarded as two monuments, or as a two-fold monument of the resurrection of Christ.

In view of all this we find that the resurrection of Christ is well attested by divine history, which cannot be destroyed, and confirmed by three monuments

which cannot be overthrown. Therefore, we have "many infallible proofs" of the resurrection of Christ, and thus of his divinity in the special sense which he declared while dwelling on earth, and which his chosen witnesses have declared since he ascended to heaven.

The divine Father knew that in order for believers in Christ to be happy they would need to be fully assured of the truth of the gospel, so that they could have the full assurance of faith. Therefore the crowning miracle of the gospel facts—the divinity of Christ as proved by the raising of his body from the grave—the divine Father intended should be proved beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt. The proof that He has given is sufficient to satisfy all who will examine it with care. Those who will not thus examine it certainly do injustice to themselves as rational beings. *Reason suggests that we should all be willing to learn.* Even that which condemns us we should not, on that account, reject, but should be willing to investigate it with fairness, and to learn all about it that we can. Then, whenever convinced of a truth, we should accept it, and use it as its Author has required. We should imitate the nobility of spirit that was manifested by the Jews of Berea, of whom we are informed in Acts 17: 11. They were "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women who were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

On this question, as well as on all others that are within the bounds of reason, divine testimony and human reason are united. Divine testimony says, that to examine evidence with care is a mark of NOBILITY.

Then the wisest and best man that heathenism ever produced said, "Whoever would enter the temple of philosophy must banish prejudice, passion, and sloth." In proportion as we conform to this saying we will examine the divine testimony in favor of Christ's divinity, and, as a result, we shall have the full assurance of faith that he is the Son of God.

But when the question of Christ's divinity is fully settled, and we have the full assurance of faith concerning the foundation of the religion which is intended to make us happy, then another question arises. That question is this: *How can we fully assure ourselves that we have accepted Christ so as to be saved by him?*

A church lady of age and experience was approached by certain young members. They had doubts about their acceptance with Christ, and sought counsel. The mentioned lady answered thus: "I have been a church member for twenty years, but I have found it necessary to say every day, If I have NOT YET accepted Christ I do accept him NOW." That lady's spiritual condition illustrates the condition of many others in regard to spiritual affairs. They have been taught that to accept Christ is a MENTAL EFFORT, and is not measured by any OUTWARD ACT, or SPECIAL OBEDIENCE. As a result they do not know whether they have really made use of the mental act that is necessary for full acceptance of Christ. As a further result, they are not fully assured that Christ has accepted them.

Another lady said that the first time she ever was led to think that something is wrong in the religious world was when she heard her older sisters talking about their religious doubts. One of them said she had felt sure she was converted, but doubts had beclouded her mind. The other confessed to the same

effect. But those instances are only indexes to the general condition of mind in the sectarian world. In view of that general condition some one has written thus:

"'Tis a point I long to know;
And oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I his, or am I not?

* * * * *

Lord, decide the doubtful case,
Thou who art thy people's sun;
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If indeed it be begun."

The foregoing stanzas are first and last of a poem of considerable length, all of which bears in the same direction. From first to last it expresses doubt, and, therefore, expresses unhappiness, for doubt and happiness are opposed to each other, and exclude each other. They cannot both exist in the same mind, at the same time, in regard to the same bearing on the same question. This being true, we can understand that we may be entirely confident that Christ is the Son of God, and that the Bible is all right. But if we are not confident that we have accepted Christ so fully that he has accepted us, then we *cannot be happy in our religious life*. Besides, if we are confident today, and doubtful tomorrow, then our future confidence will be damaged by the thought that doubts may again arise.

But Paul wrote to certain Christians thus: "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." (Philippians 4: 4). Then, in Hebrews 10: 22, he wrote after this manner: "Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Such writings clearly show that Chris-

tians were intended to be ALWAYS CONFIDENT, and ALWAYS HAPPY. Even when "in heaviness through manifold temptations" the Apostle Peter declared that the Christians whom he addressed could "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." See 1st Peter 1: 6-8. All such writings, and many more that might be copied, clearly show that doubt was not intended to be mingled with the confidence which God's people have in him, in his word, nor in their acceptance of Christ through his word.

But what is the standard by which we can measure our acceptance of Christ so as to have the full assurance of faith at all times? The answer to this question is, that the necessary standard is found in *plain, humble, wholehearted obedience to the Lord's requirements*. In order to be fully assured that we have ACCEPTED THE LORD so that he ACCEPTS US, we must fear God, love God, know God, love Christ, and love our brethren, and even love our enemies, so that the Lord will acknowledge our fearing, and knowing, and loving to be of the right kind and degree. And all this is to be determined by *plain, humble, wholehearted obedience*.

First, let us consider the question of fearing God. Christians are required to "fear God." We learn this in 1st Peter 2: 17. But what is the evidence, or test, of our Godward fear? In order to be fully assured of the right answer to this question we need to consider the case of Abraham, as recorded in Genesis twenty-second chapter. In Romans 15: 4 we learn that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." In view of this we may go back to the Old Testament for an example of fearing God, even as Paul resorted to that Testament for examples of believing God.

Then let us consider the record given of Abraham in Genesis twenty-second chapter. We are there informed that God spoke to him, and commanded him to offer his son Isaac upon an altar in a certain land, and on a certain mountain, of which he should be informed. In the record we are then informed that Abraham arose early in the morning and proceeded to do that which God commanded. He took his son, and wood to burn his body with. He took with him also two of his servants, and started in the appointed direction. How he felt the first day and night of his journey toward the appointed place we are not informed, nor how he felt, nor what he said, the second day and night. But we are told that on the third day he "lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." Next we learn that "Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Then the record declares, "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto his father Abraham, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is a lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he

said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

But did not God know all that was in Abraham's mind and heart before he had tried him in regard to offering his son upon an altar? We cannot doubt it. But God was not satisfied without the PRACTICAL TEST, or, at least, he did not acknowledge that Abraham feared him *till he had shown it in obedience* to the fullest extent that divine mercy would permit him to go. Then, and not till then, did God say that Abraham feared him. This shows that fearing God in the case of Abraham was not something that was all summed up in the head or heart, but that it was necessary for Abraham to show it in the fullest obedience that God would permit.

The practical test of fearing God in the case of Abraham was, therefore, in plain, humble, wholehearted obedience to God's requirement. As it was with Abraham, so it is with us. Christians are required to "fear God," and the practical test of their fear is found in their obedience. When we have endured this test then God acknowledges that we fear him, and this gives us the "full assurance of faith" that we need in order to make us happy.

Now let us consider the question of loving God. Many years ago a boy heard the gospel, read it, believed and obeyed it. Soon after his obedience he heard several men talking about religion, and he entered into the talk. As he had lately obeyed the gospel one of the men thought he would test him. So he asked the boy several questions. He answered them by reading in his New Testament. Finally, the man, who was questioning him, said, "Ah, my dear boy, I

clearly see you don't know anything about the love of God." In response the boy asked, "Do you know?" "Ah, yes, I have known for twenty years," said he. "Well, tell us what it is." "Ah," said the man, "it is something we FEEL in the HEART, but we can't TELL what it is." Then the boy said, "Why, here is something strange: you say you have known for twenty years what the love of God is, and you think that I don't know what it is, and yet you can't tell what it is! There is something strange about this." "Well, perhaps, YOU can tell us what it is," said the man. "Of course, I can," was the answer. And so saying he turned to 1st John 5: 3, and read this: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." *Did not that boy show and tell what the love of God is in the clearest possible manner?* He certainly did, for he read the very scripture which declares that it is *doing the will of God*. This shows that it is something more than a THOUGHT or a FEELING. Mankind may think and feel as much as is possible; but if they do not KEEP THE DIVINE COMMANDMENTS the Lord will not acknowledge that they love him. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." *This is the unerring, or infallible, test of man's love for God.*

But what of man's love for Christ? We might suppose that it, likewise, is shown by keeping the divine commandments. But we are not left to suppositions. In John 14: 15 we read, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This implies that to love Christ and keep his commandments are closely related. But this is not all. In John 14: 21 we read that Christ said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Then in the twenty-third and

twenty-fourth verses of the same chapter we read this: "If a man love me, he will keep my words. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." All these sayings of our Savior clearly show that we love him in proportion as we keep his commandments. They show, likewise, that the Savior confesses that we love him if we keep his commandments, and that if we do not keep his commandments he declares that we do not love him.

Notice again that which He says. "If a man love me he will keep my words" and "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." This does not say that our love for Christ is decided by the thoughts of our minds, by the feelings of our hearts, nor by the intentions of our wills. We may THINK, and FEEL, and INTEND, as much as may be possible. But if we DO NOT OBEY Christ's commands, and KEEP HIS WORDS, just as he has given them in the New Covenant scriptures, he certainly *will not acknowledge that we love him*. Obedience to His commands is the unerring, or infallible, test of our love for him. Those who obey Him aright must think, and feel, and intend, after the right manner. We are required to exercise our highest and best power of thought, and to have the highest and best feelings, with the highest and best intentions. But all these will fail to show that we love Christ if we do *not obey his commands*.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Human speech, with divine precision chosen, could not set forth a doctrine more clearly than that our love for Christ, and his acknowledgment of our love for him, are both determined by our obedience to his commands. This being true, we can see that if we refuse to repent of all our sins,

or refuse to confess publicly our faith in Christ, or refuse to be baptized with water baptism so that a burial in baptism has been completed, then the Lord Jesus will refuse to acknowledge that we love him. A profession of love for Christ, without a wholehearted obedience to him, may be safely spoken of as RELIGIOUS GUSH. What do we say of children who profess love for their parents, but will not obey them, or of a husband who professes to love his wife, but will not try to provide for her? Such profession of love we regard as empty and vain, or as GUSH. What then may we say of all professions of love for Christ which do not show themselves in willingness to obey him in all that he requires? *It is simply gush.*

But, perhaps, some one is ready to say, "My Bible tells me that I know I have passed from death to life because I love the brethren; and, therefore, I know that I am all right though I have never been baptized." In answer to the one who thus expresses himself, and tries to excuse himself for not obeying the Savior in baptism, we may inquire, *What is the evidence of our love of the brethren?* In 1st John 3: 14 we do indeed find this statement: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." *But what is the Scripture test of our love for the brethren?* Some may think that love of party may mean love of the brethren. But the Apostle John referred to love of Christians, or love for Christians. Now, what is the PROOF that we love Christians, and, thus, that we love the children of God? Is it found in our thoughts, or in our feelings, or in our intentions? Is it found in any one, or any two, or in all, of these? Many persons seem to suppose that all love is summed up in mere emotion. But this is a serious mistake. Our love

must be PRACTICAL in order to be of value, and a practical love is such as *shows itself in deeds*. But here is the divine testimony in regard to our love for "the children of God." "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Then in order to shut off the possibility of mistake in regard to man's love for God the Apostle John added, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." See 1st John 5: 2, 3.

In view of all that has been set forth on this question we can understand that the practical test of all love is in doing that which the loved one requires. This does not mean that parents must do all that their children require, for children are not supposed to know what is best for them, at all times. Yet if parents do not take as good care of their children as may be possible for them, then their professed love for them may be regarded with doubt. But this is specially true of all professions of love for God and Christ, and for the children of God.

All that is true of professions of love for God and Christ is true, likewise, of knowing God and Christ. Many persons profess to know the Lord, but in works deny him. Paul wrote of such in his letter to Titus. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. See Titus 1: 16.

What then is the infallible test of KNOWING God so as to meet his approval? Is it decided by thought, feeling, or intention? Does the amount of information that a man has concerning God's greatness and goodness, majesty, power, and might, determine this question? In John 2: 3, 4 we find the answer. "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his com-

mandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Here is the infallible test on this question of KNOWING God. It is found in obedience—strict, humble, obedience to the Lord's will. We must think, and feel, and intend aright, but if we do not obey the Lord we shall not be acknowledged by the Lord as knowing him. To KNOW him, and then to KNOW that we KNOW him, is the fullest possible assurance. And such assurance is found in obeying the Lord.

The question of faith, also of confession of faith, and calling on the Lord, is decided by the same standard. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" See Matthew 7: 21; Luke 6: 46. To this we may add James 2: 14-26, by which we are informed that faith without works is dead, even as the body without the spirit is dead.

In view of all this we are now ready for our conclusion. As God intended mankind to be happy in their religious life he gave to them a religion which is made sure to them "by many infallible proofs," and then gave to them a standard by which they may decide their acceptance of that religion "by many infallible proofs." The first class of proofs is recorded in the scriptures, and in the history of the monuments which Christ established, namely, baptism and the communion on the first day of the week. Then the second class of proofs is found in the humble obedience which we show in our own lives. The severest tests are found in our observance of the ordinances, namely, baptism, and the com-

munion. Baptism means a death to sin, and a resurrection to a new life. The communion means a remembrance of the cost of sin, and a renewal of purpose of Christians to keep themselves unspotted from the world. Both of these ordinances can be so attended to that we can ALWAYS have in ourselves the "full assurance of faith."

Do we desire to be happy all through our earthly pilgrimage? To ask this question is to answer it. All mankind desire to be happy every day, though few of them know what happiness is. Most of them mistake pleasurable enjoyment for happiness, and will turn from real happiness in order to enjoy some earthward delight. But we should learn the difference between present pleasure and future good, and should learn to deny this for that. Happiness, true happiness, daily happiness, is within the reach of us all. It is found in the INFALLIBLE religion set forth in the New Testament, and in accepting it in the INFALLIBLE way that consists of a *wholehearted obedience to all its requirements.*

SERMON NO. XIV

THE FAIRNESS OF TRUTH

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. John 10: 37.

JESUS Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14: 6.) This saying shows that Christ was not in doubt about himself. Yet he did not ask any one to believe in him, except by reason of testimony. Therefore he said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." This saying of Jesus is an index to the fairness of truth in all ages. It is an index, likewise, to the fairness of the advocates of truth in all ages. Truth does not depend on deception for its acceptance among mankind; neither do its advocates depend on any unfairness in making it known, nor in advocating it.

If professed advocates of truth vary from fairness in their efforts in behalf of truth, they disgrace their profession, and dishonor their cause. The Author of truth does not require them to act the part of unfairness, and he condemns them when they do so. This fact should attract the attention of all fair-minded persons, and should cause them to be willing to form the acquaintance of Him who said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." He did not ask per-

sons to accept him, as the Son of God, by reason of his speeches, but referred them to his works. At a later date He caused one of his followers to write of his works after this manner: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." See John 20: 31. This is entirely fair. And, though we cannot now see the works which Jesus Christ did, yet we can judge of their moral character, and of their effect upon mankind. In so doing we can decide whether or not they were done by one who deserved to be called the Son of God.

But the fairness of truth has been shown in other ages. For instance, in Numbers sixteenth chapter we find an account of a rebellion in Israel. A certain prominent man, named Korah, with certain others, rebelled against the authority that God had given to Moses and his brother Aaron. Those men said to Moses and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon you." That charge was very unjust, "And when Moses heard it he fell upon his face." He did not desire the position of a leader of the Israelites; but God forced him to take it. Therefore, he fell on his face when he heard that any one thought he had, of his own accord, taken any part of the authority that belonged to it.

But God told him what to do in regard to the rebellious ones, and he did it. We are informed that he was directed to call on all the other Israelites to "depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in their sins." Then Moses said, "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of

all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord."

Could Moses have made a fairer speech than that we have just copied? Was it not ENTIRELY fair for him to propose what he did, and to suspend the question of his right to do what he had done on a MIRACLE, especially a miracle such as had never before been done among mankind? And what was the result? We are informed that, "As he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also."

Again we may ask, *What could have been more fair than the speech of Moses?* What could have been MORE FAIR than the test he proposed? He was willing to risk everything in regard to the question of his authority on "a new thing"—a miracle that had never before been heard of among men. And everything came to pass just as he had proposed. Then the question of his authority was settled, and a splendid illustration of the fairness of truth was given.

But there are other illustrations of the same kind. Let us consider the record found in the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings. In that chapter we read of a wicked king named Ahab, whose wife was

named Jezebel, and of a prophet of God named Elijah. We read that Elijah said to Ahab, "Now, therefore, send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, who eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye upon the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

Was not that a fair offer? Could anything have been more fair, or more honorable? The Prophet Elijah proposed a test of which all could judge. He proposed that they should take two oxen—that he would take one and the prophets of Baal should take the other—and that each ox should be offered in sacrifice. He proposed likewise that the prophets of Baal should call on their gods, while he would call on the Lord, and that the God who would answer by fire should be acknowledged as God. We are not informed that the prophets of Baal made any answer. But the people who had been misled by them said, "It is well spoken." That is to say, they regarded it as a FAIR PROPOSITION. And

so must all others regard it. It was ENTIRELY FAIR, and the test he proposed was STRICTLY HONORABLE.

And what was the result? The record informs us that the prophets of Baal took their ox, and prepared it for sacrifice. Then they called upon their god "from morning till noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered." Then they became frantic, "and leaped upon the altar which was made." They even went so far that they cut themselves "with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." In the meantime the Prophet Elijah mocked them, and said, "Cry aloud for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." But everything on their side was a failure, except that they showed zeal—a blind zeal in behalf of their cause, and made much noise.

Then Elijah said unto the people, "Come near unto me." And, when the people had come near unto him, he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down, and he made a trench about the altar. Then he put wood upon the altar in order, and put the ox that he had killed, and prepared by cutting it in pieces, and then said, "Fill four barrells with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran about the altar, and he filled the trench also with water." Then we are informed that, "It came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all

these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

When Elijah had offered this prayer, we are informed that, "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." In other words, the people, who had been misled by the prophets of Baal and the wicked king, who then reigned over Israel, were convinced that the God whom the Prophet Elijah worshipped should be acknowledged as God. The test was FAIR, and truth was DEFENDED, and we find the record of that occasion is a *splendid illustration of the fairness of truth.*

Before we leave the Old Testament let us take another illustration of the fairness of truth. We do not need to leave the life of the wicked king, of whom we have just been informed, in order to get it. In the last chapter of the first book of Kings we are informed that Ahab, king of Israel, desired the King of Judah to go to war with him against the King of Syria. The King of Judah agreed to do so, but desired to hear what a true prophet of the Lord would say on the subject. The false prophets told them to go, but the King of Judah asked, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we may inquire of him?" King Ahab said, "There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; because he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." That speech of Ahab revealed a disposition which is common in human nature, and especially in those

who are wrong in religion. They are disposed to hate those who tell them that they are wrong.

But let us consider the case of Ahab. The Prophet Micaiah was called, and when he was questioned in the name of the Lord, he uttered that which was against Ahab. Then Ahab said to the King of Judah, "Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?" Then Micaiah told him that a lying spirit had been put into the mouth of his prophets to encourage him to go to a war against the Syrians and fall there. The King of Israel then said, "Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, and water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you."

Was not that a FAIR test? A king was going to war. Many prophets encouraged him to go, but one of them said to him that which implied that he would be killed if he went to war. In answer the king said, "Take this fellow, and put him in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." That is to say, he ordered that the prophet, who had told him that he should be killed in the war which he proposed, should be put in prison, and fed with prison fare until he would come in peace. In response that prophet called all the people to witness, that if that king would return *at all in peace* then the Lord *had not spoken by him*. And what was the result? The King of Israel went to war, went into battle, was wounded, was taken out of the battle, and died. *Here is another illustration of the fairness of truth.*

And now we are prepared to consider the fair test of truth that the Savior proposed. In the words of the text, chosen for this sermon, He said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." That is to say, though He knew himself to be all that he professed to be, and thus knew that he was worthy of the confidence of all, yet he did not ask to be received with confidence except by his works. Though He could utter words that had never before been spoken, and could say what had never before been said, yet he did not ask to be received by reason of his words. But He referred to his works, and said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."

And what may we say of His works? He gave sight to the blind, even to those who had been born blind. He gave hearing to the deaf, even to those who had been born deaf. He gave strength to the lame, even to those who had been born lame. Besides, He healed those who were afflicted with all manner of diseases. He cast out evil spirits that afflicted many, and, in some instances, raised the dead to life again. Those who opposed Him were closely critical. Besides, they had among them the most learned of the Age in which they lived. As a result they were the most capable of detecting anything not genuine in His works, if anything not genuine could have been found in them. But we are not informed that any charge of shams, or bogus miracles, was ever made against Him. When certain ones who hated Him could not deny that which he had done, they admitted his works, but charged them to the devil. In other words, they charged that He cast out evil spirits by the power of the devil. If any defect in the miracles could have been detected they would have surely been exposed. But they were all so very

evident that the most critical men, of the Age in which they were wrought, could not deny them, nor did they venture to cast any reflection on their reality. But they did say on one occasion that He performed certain miracles by the power of the devil! By so doing they committed the only sin that is unpardonable, as far as the Bible informs us.

But some man may say, "I have never seen a miracle, and I am not required to accept the testimony of people who lived in an age of ignorance; therefore I am justified in not believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

At first sight, or sound, such a speech as that which has just been offered in opposition to Christ, may seem to have something reasonable in it. But upon reflection it will appear to be only perverseness, and that it does not honor the head nor heart of any one that makes use of it. Those who saw the miracles which Christ did certainly had plain, and positive, evidence thrust upon them. But they could not see their outworkings, nor what their influence would be a hundred years from that time, not to speak of eighteen hundred years. They could not decide whether the effect of them would be of short or long duration. Neither could they understand what would be the effect of the words of Jesus Christ, nor the effect of his example of benevolence, or doing good, to mankind. But we who now live, have thrust upon us **THE EFFECT** of His works, his words, and his example of benevolence, *eighteen hundred years after he left this world*. We know that **THE EFFECT** of the words, and works, and kind example of Jesus Christ *has been lasting*. We know, therefore, that we now have a **STANDING MIRACLE** in favor of the divinity of Jesus Christ which is not found in favor

of any other being that ever walked this earth in human form.

But before we consider this question further we need to contrast Jesus Christ with Mahomet, and with all other founders of new religions, whose influence has been lasting. Jesus Christ is the only one who never authorized his followers to fight for him by using physical violence, or to fight in carnal warfare. The record of His earth-life informs us, in Luke 9: 51-56, that certain of his disciples wished to know whether they should call fire down from heaven to destroy the people of a certain village in Samaria, because they did not receive him. But He rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what matter of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Besides, in John 18: 36 we learn that Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Contrast this with the example of Mahomet, who, after making a few converts by promises of fleshly enjoyments in this world and the world to come, armed them and began to wage a carnal warfare to make other converts. His history of success is one of *fleshly indulgence and of bloodshed*. This is the very opposite of the history of the success of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mahomet's success was decided by the FLESH, while the success of Christ was decided by the SPIRIT. Thus it was; thus it is; and thus it will be. Therefore the success of Christ, and that of Mahomet should be CONTRASTED, but not COMPARED. They are OPPOSITES, and not RESEMBLANCES.

Here we may consider with advantage a remark of Napoleon Bonaparte. He said in his speech on the

divinity of Christ, which he wrote a brief period before his death, "Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I, founded empires. But upon what did we found them? Upon FORCE. Jesus Christ alone conceived the idea of founding an empire on LOVE." But the empire of Mahomet was founded upon FORCE, and is maintained by FORCE. The same is true of other empires, both religious and secular, and they are therefore the opposite of the kingdom of Christ. Such empires will be overthrown.

Now we are prepared to consider the benevolence of Jesus Christ. He went about doing good to needy ones, throughout his personal ministry, and taught his disciples to do the same. He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." See Acts 20: 35; 2nd Corinthians 8: 9. In all this He did the works of his Father, and showed his Father's love for the poor of mankind. In Isaiah 66: 2 we learn that God said, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." In the law that He gave to the Jews we find special provisions made for the poor. See Leviticus 25: 25-55. Yet it was left for the Lord Jesus Christ to set the best personal example in behalf of the poor among mankind. That example has been admired by all who have considered it aright, and all benevolent institutions have been the outgrowth of that example upon the hearts of mankind. On the other side of the personal life of Jesus Christ on earth we do not find an account of poor-houses, nor asylums for the blind, and deaf, nor even for the insane. But all those classes of unfortunates were suffered to drift around and live by begging, or in any other way that they could, if they did not have special friends to take

care of them. What was true in regard to the Jews was true in regard to other nations. On the other side of the personal example of Christ, in showing his Father's pity and love for the poor, we are not informed in history that mankind had, in any country, conceived the idea of founding benevolent institutions. The few provisions, if any, that had been made in behalf of the poor, except as found in the Jewish law, are scarcely worth mentioning.

But this side of Christ's life on earth in the flesh we find the history of benevolent institutions in all nations that have accepted the Bible as God's written revelation to man. The civil governments of those nations have founded such institutions. Besides, many private individuals have founded institutions of that kind. Persons who have not pretended to understand the gospel of Christ, nor made any profession of religion, have, in some instances, attempted to imitate the benevolence of Jesus Christ toward the poor. As a result, institutions have been established to take care of all classes of unfortunates. Certain nations and persons, corporations, and churches, have, seemingly, tried to excel each other in benevolence toward the poor, as a result of the example of Jesus Christ in going about and doing good.

But this is not all. Many persons who have not been rich enough to found institutions have been liberal toward the poor in a private way, and have been kind to them in sickness. All this, and much more, has been the result of the example of Jesus Christ. Here, then, we find a CONSTANT EVIDENCE of the good deeds of Jesus Christ, which he said were "the works" of God. This is evident in the ninth chapter of John, and especially in the fourth verse. In that verse He said, "I

must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." This He said when about to open the eyes of a blind man, which shows that he regarded the deed he was about to do as one of "the works" of God. In view of all this we can clearly see the bearing of the text on us who live in the latter part of the Gospel Age. Jesus said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not," and we can point to the results of his deeds of mercy, as those results are now seen in all Bible lands.

Who then will say that we need to see miracles in order to be convinced that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If the monuments of the kindness of Jesus Christ, as they are found in every benevolent institution and society in Bible lands, will not be considered aright, then what evidence have we that actual miracles would be considered aright? The Savior spoke of Abraham as saying to the rich man in Hades concerning his five brethren, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one should arise from the dead." (Luke 16: 31.) On the same principle, we may say that those who refuse to consider the benevolent societies that exist in Bible lands, in their proper bearings, would not consider aright actual miracles if they could be thrust upon them. But those who consider the mentioned societies aright will certainly be convinced that the One whose example caused such a beautiful outworking of kindness toward the unfortunates among mankind must have been more than a mere human being. They will be convinced that He was all that he professed to be,—*the Son of man and the Son of God.*

Truth is fair in its relations to mankind, and it requires that they shall be fair in considering it. Truth

requires only a fair examination of its claims in order that it may produce conviction of its real existence, and of its value. But those who refuse to give it such an examination now are of the same class with those who refused to give it such an examination when Christ was on earth. He said of them, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Thus the Savior regarded those who were not willing to learn of him when he was on earth, and thus he regards all of that class now. They are finished in their education; incapable of learning anything more because they are not willing to learn. They think they know enough Bible to save them, or they know enough of something else to persuade themselves to think that they are not in any danger. In either condition they are numbered with those who are "willingly ignorant." (2nd Pet. 3: 5.) They have not learned enough to understand their need of information, nor that all the knowledge of which human beings are capable in this world, at its best, is made up of fragments. We cannot understand the beginning, nor the ending, of anything. We do not know either the primary causes, or final results, of anything. If we do not understand this, or are not humble enough to acknowledge it, when we understand it, then we show that we are hopelessly ignorant, or hopelessly perverse.

But let us consider further the words chosen as the text for this sermon. Jesus Christ said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." Now let us give attention to the existence of the ordinances,—bap-

tism and the Lord's supper. Whence did they come? With whom did they originate? Who has modified, or counterfeited, them? Why have they continued to be observed through eighteen centuries, or more? Water baptism was sanctified by Jesus when he went from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of a man named John. The eating of bread and drinking of grape juice, on the first day of the week, was sanctified by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus we are informed in the New Testament, and these are the only reasons that can be given which justly account for the existence of the mentioned ordinances eighteen centuries from the time they were given. They are not of the pompous kind that appeal to pride, nor are they of the mystic kind that appeal to superstition. On the contrary, they are of the plain and simple kind that appeal to faith upon abundant testimony. They are both full of practical meaning, for they both have a backward and a forward bearing. Baptism refers backward to our death to sin, and forward to our new life. Then, the Lord's supper refers backward to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and forward to the time when he will come again. Both of these ordinances in both of their bearings appeal to the reason of mankind by the testimony offered in favor of them. They are both explained in their bearings, and should be accepted by reason of an intelligent faith. In their clearness and constancy they are in harmony with the appearance of the ordinances of heaven as seen in the sun, moon, and stars. Their constant existence proves that they are a part of the works which Jesus referred to when he said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." The miracles which Jesus did while on earth were incidental, but his example and his or-

dinances were intended to be constant.

But this is not all. After eighteen centuries have passed since Jesus Christ was on earth in person "the church of God," made up of "churches of Christ," is in existence. This church wears the names that Christ gave to it, has the officers that Christ intended should be permanent in it, and keeps the ordinances that Christ ordained for it. Besides, it accepts the only rule of faith and practice that He gave for its guidance. In every place where this church exists it is the church of Christ in that place, and it is a constant showing forth of the divine arrangement for the conversion of sinners and the perfection of believers. It exists and continues without appealing to human passion or prejudice, ignorance or superstition. But it appeals to our reverence, and to our highest exercise of reason in regard to its existence, its doctrine, its practice, and its names, with its worship on the first day of the week.

The members of this church appeal to mankind by saying, Here is the book, the Bible, which all acknowledge as true who do not deserve to be regarded as infidels concerning God and Christ. Come and let us reason together, say the members of this church. Let us examine what is found in this Book, and compare it with that which we preach and practice. If we do not preach the same doctrine that is here set forth, then believe us not. If we do not advocate the same practice that is here recorded, then believe us not. Do not take anything upon our say-so, but read and examine for yourselves. Then judge whether we deserve to be regarded as the church of Christ or not. If we do not set forth and obey the teachings of Christ then do not believe us.

This church pretends to preach the same faith, and

the same degree of faith, that is set forth in the New Testament. It preaches the faith which is produced by divine testimony, either heard or read, or both heard and read. It refers to John 20: 30, 31, also to Romans 10: 17, as evidence on this subject. The preachers of this church quote and read and then read and quote, these words: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." To this they add, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Then these preachers say, to those they address, Examine these scriptures for yourselves, and if we do not preach the scriptures on this subject, *believe us not.*

On the question of repentance the preachers of the church of Christ, in every place where they preach, say to the people who hear them, Come and let us reason together on this subject. In Luke 24: 47 Jesus said, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." This scripture is often repeated by preachers of the church of Christ, likewise the saying of Paul that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17: 30.) These, and many other scriptures the preachers of this church urge upon their hearers both publicly and privately, and then say to them, Come, let us reason together on this question, and if we do not preach exactly as the word of God teaches, *then do not believe us.*

On the question of confession of faith the mentioned

preachers say the same. They read and quote this saying of Jesus: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10: 32, 33.) To this they add these words of our Savior: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8: 38.) Then they quote Romans 10: 10, in which an inspired apostle declares, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." These and other scriptures, on the subject of confession, are set forth by the preachers of the church of Christ, and then they say to their hearers, If we do not preach exactly the doctrine on this subject that is set forth in the New Testament, *then do not believe us.*

When they come to the question of water baptism they proceed after the same manner. They repeat the saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," as recorded in Mark 16: 16. They show that if persons do not believe in God and Christ they cannot please God in being baptized, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." See Hebrews 11: 6. They repeat also the saying that is recorded in Acts 2: 38, in which the Apostle Peter commanded heart-pierced believers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, or into the forgiveness of sins. Then they refer to Acts 8: 35-39, in which record an account is given of a certain man, who heard another man preach the doctrine of Jesus Christ, believed it, confessed his faith, and then went down into

the water, and was baptized, after which he came up out of the water and went on his way rejoicing. These preachers refer also to Romans 6: 4, in which the statement is recorded that we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, and are raised to walk in newness of life. In connection with these they refer to others on the same subject, and say to those who hear them, If we do not preach the truth as recorded in the New Testament, on this and all other subjects, *then do not believe us.*

Is not this FAIR? Is it not the FAIRNESS OF TRUTH? Can error afford thus to challenge mankind? To ask these questions is to answer them. Preachers of the gospel of Christ can offer a challenge which the preachers of human creeds and confessions of faith in religion *cannot afford to offer.* We can afford to imitate the Savior when he said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."

This ought to attract the attention of all fair-minded men and women. Preachers of the churches of Christ do not try to excite, confuse, nor overwhelm, those whom they address. But they appeal to their understanding, and call on them to investigate. In so doing they offer a fair test, even as Moses did to certain rebellious ones in Israel, and as Elijah did to the idolatrous people whom he addressed, and as Micaiah did when he made his last speech to a certain wicked king. Yes, they offer a fair test, even as Jesus Christ did when he said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."

Why then will not all the fair-minded men and women to whom such an appeal is made pause and consider the professions of Jesus Christ, and the professions of his church? They will do so when they do

themselves the justice to consider that truth is ALWAYS FAIR, and that error can NEVER afford to be fair. The advocates of error may sometimes make a show of fairness, but when fully tested they always recede from that show. But the advocates of truth can always afford to challenge investigation, and they do not need to shrink from the most searching investigation.

Jesus Christ appears before mankind, not only as the Prince of Peace, and the Prince of benevolent men, but he appears as the Prince of all who are fair-minded, and honorable. He warned his followers of all the evils that would befall them in this world, and said to his enemies, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." In view of all this we should delight to join ourselves to Him by obeying his gospel, and uniting with his church. Then, and not till then, may we rejoice in the fair-mindedness of New Testament Christians.

SERMON NO. XV

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS IN DEVOTION TO GOD AND CHRIST

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Matthew 22: 37.

GOD has never consented to divide honors with any one. In Isaiah 42: 8 He said, "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Therefore He does not accept a second place in the minds and hearts of his people. In Deuteronomy 6: 5 He commanded his ancient people to love him with all the heart, soul, and might. In Psalm 119: 2, 10, 34, 58 we learn that a certain king of Israel named David wrote thus on the subject of wholeheartedness: "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. . . . With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. . . . Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. . . . I entreated thy favor with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word." Then in 1st John 2: 5 we read, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." Finally, in Jude twenty-first verse we read this: "Keep yourselves in the

love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

The scriptures that have just been brought before us clearly imply that God has always required the first place in the affections and devotions of his people. The psalmist David understood something of this, and, therefore, wrote as he did concerning wholeheartedness in seeking and serving, and praising God. He regarded himself as under obligations to be wholehearted in his devotion to God. He had learned much of God's greatness and goodness, power, majesty and might, grandeur and glory. But in David's day the revelation had not been made that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Nor had the revelation then been made that, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Neither had this statement of revelation been made: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." See John 3: 16, Romans 5: 8, 1st John 4: 10. Yet without these revelations David regarded himself as under obligation to be wholehearted in seeking and serving and praising God. In view of this, ought not we to whom all these precious revelations that are recorded in the gospel, have been made, be wholehearted in our devotion to God? To ask this question is to answer it. Those who live in the Gospel Age have more reasons, and greater reasons, than any who lived in preceding ages, to be wholehearted in their devotion to God.

But the confession must be made, by all candid persons, that wholehearted devotion to God is contrary to

our human nature. We have within ourselves the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. These constantly incline us to the things of earth, and sometimes urge us to gratify ourselves beyond divine restrictions. Then this world with its beauties, grandeurs, and glories, invites us to gratify ourselves. This world as God has created it, as man has improved it, and as the devil has perverted it, invites, and, in many instances, **URGES** us to go beyond the lines that God has marked out for us. By reason of all this we may safely say that it is difficult for most of us to become wholehearted in devotion to God and Christ, and when we become wholehearted it is difficult so to remain.

This life has been likened to going up an enchanted hill, at the top of which are riches, and honors, and glories for all who will ascend it without looking behind them, or turning their eyes to the right hand, or to the left. But on the way up that hill are groves and caves from which charming music comes, and falls bewitchingly on the ears of those who ascend that hill. As a result, if they are not constantly on their guard, and do not set their faces like flint, and their hearts like steel in the direction of the summit of the hill, they are liable to turn their eyes, and even to look backward, and so lose the prize that is offered.

Such is this life. The ascent is steep, and rugged. Our best efforts are sometimes required to continue going upward. Besides, there are many places to which we are invited for ease and indulgence, even sinful indulgence which is in harmony with our animal nature. As a result we need to set our faces and hearts sternly and constantly against the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, in order to avoid being overcome by them. The only way to do this is to

become, and to remain, **WHOLEHEARTED** in devotion to God and Christ. Such devotion is necessary because God **REQUIRES** it, and our own safety **DEMANDS** it.

Do some persons become discouraged, and say that to be always wholehearted is impossible, and it is useless to try to be always on our guard? If so, the question arises, **THEN WHAT?** If we become discouraged and drift as the impulse within us suggests, we shall become victims of circumstances, and of our earthward inclinations. The extremes and extravagances of passion will take possession of us, and after a few years of earthward joys, and sighs, and tears, and groans, we shall go into an untimely and unhonored grave. And, **THEN WHAT?**

Here we may consider with advantage the story of a young man who was about to enter an institution of learning. The president of that institution inquired of him concerning his purpose. The young man stated that he wished to get a liberal education. "And, **THEN WHAT?**" inquired the president. "I shall then wish to attend a law school and graduate," was the answer. "And, **THEN WHAT?**" further inquired the president. "I shall then wish to become a successful lawyer, gain sufficient to take care of me in the latter part of life, retire in the meridian of life, and live to enjoy a good old age." "And, **THEN WHAT?**" again inquired the president. "I suppose that **THEN** I shall have to **DIE**," said the young man. "And, **THEN WHAT?**" "Well, the truth is," said the young man, "I haven't thought much about that." Yet after all, that is the most important question. It may be important for us to inquire, where we shall spend tomorrow, or next week, or next month, or next year, or where we shall spend the remainder of life. Yet the most important question is, *Where shall*

we spend the endless ages? A story is told of a lady who recalled these lines of a favorite poem, wrote them on a card, and laid it down:

“To think of summers yet to come,
That I’ll not live to see;
To think a weed is yet to bloom,
Of dust that I shall be.”

The next day when she returned to the same place, she picked up the card, and found that some one had written on it these lines:

“To think when heaven and earth are fled,
And times and seasons o’er;
When all that can die shall be dead,
That I shall die no more:
Oh, where will then my portion be—
Where shall I spend eternity?”

And THIS is the question which should be in our minds EVERY DAY, and, if possible, EVERY HOUR. It is more important than any other, and, even, than all others combined. If we so live that when we shall come to die we shall be prepared to spend the ages of eternity at God’s right hand we shall have made a glorious success of this life. But, if we so live that after this life will have been ended we shall be banished forever from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, then our life on earth will have proved a dreadful failure. “All is well that ends well,” is an old and true saying. It is equally true to say, “All is a failure that ends in a failure.” Therefore we should, with wholehearted earnestness, struggle every day to prepare for eternity.

Most of mankind try to prepare for eternity on a compromised plan. They intend to be saved, but think that they can venture to try an easier way than that of wholehearted earnestness. Their disposition is illus-

trated by the story of the man who said he had signed a pledge to abstain from all drunk-making drinks, but had reserved a corner in his pledge for lager beer. He was willing to give up all other drinks, but was disposed to hold to his darling lager. This story illustrates the disposition of multitudes of professed Christians. They will consent to serve the Lord WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS, but are not willing to be WHOLEHEARTED. They wish to reserve a CORNER for some darling vice, and flatter themselves that they can be saved even if they should die while practicing that vice. They are not unreserved—not wholehearted.

The condition of mind in all professed Christians who are not wholehearted in their devotion to God and Christ, is illustrated in the case of a man named Naaman, of whom we may read in the fifth chapter of the second book of Kings. He was captain of the host of the King of Syria. But he was a leper; that is, he had fastened on his person an incurable disease called leprosy. And, he might have remained a leper through the remainder of his life if he had not learned of a prophet of God in Samaria—that Samaria which was a part of the land now called Palestine. But having learned of that prophet he went to his house. Instead of going out to him, and showing him great respect because he was a great man, the prophet, whose name was Elisha, sent his servant out to him, and by that servant told him to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan, and he should be clean. This made him angry, and he went away in a rage. But one of his servants asked him whether, if the prophet had told him to do some great thing, he would not have done it. To this he added, "How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean." This speech caused Na-

aman to humble himself sufficiently to go down into the Jordan, and to dip himself seven times, according to the saying of the man of God. And we are informed, in the record of that event, that "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

The record we are now considering next sets forth that after Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy he "returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him and said, Behold now I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." This was unreserved, and, we might suppose, was a wholehearted confession. Then after offering the prophet a present, Naaman declared his intention to worship only the God of Israel, and he desired some earth of the land of Israel, with which to build an altar. This is what he said on the subject: "Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice, unto other gods, but unto the Lord."

But just then the man Naaman seemed to think of his master over in Syria, the king whom he served, and he said to the Prophet Elisha, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." That is to say, that man Naaman wished to reserve a CORNER in his vow of allegiance to the God of Israel, which would allow him to remain on good terms with his master by bowing in the house of his heathen god. He wished an INDULGENCE to that effect, and this may be justly regarded as the beginning of the doc-

trine of indulgences. Naaman, the Syrian leper, after having been cleansed wished to be **INDULGED** in acting the hypocrite in the house of his master's heathen god! *This is a bad beginning for the doctrine of indulgences.*

A certain church sold indulgences to as many of her members as were disposed to buy them, and could pay them. But a large majority of professed Christians, even in Protestant churches, claim the privilege of indulgences. They reserve a **CORNER**, or **SEVERAL CORNERS**, in their vows of allegiance to God and Christ, for the practice of one, or more, of their darling vices. In other words, they are **NOT WHOLEHEARTED** in their religious devotion, but reserve to themselves the supposed right to do as they please in some respects. In either doctrine or practice they make reservations, and in some instances they make them in both doctrine and practice. But God does not propose to accept a second place in man's religious devotions. On the contrary, He is jealous on this question. He said to the Jews, "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." And when a certain king named Herod received honor, due only to God, he was smitten by an angel of God, and died miserably. See Acts 12: 21-23. *God does not divide honors with man.*

But let us take a few instances of the doctrine we are now considering, as we may find them in ordinary life. Human nature is the same in all generations, and a more common weakness can scarcely be found in mankind than the disposition to serve God half-heartedly, or in some other degree less than he requires. While the apostate church **SELLS** indulgences the common disposition is to **TAKE** them, or make time and place for them. Human nature, and the doctrine of

wholehearted devotion to God, and Christ, are directly opposed to each other. A few persons may be so constituted that they can easily make of themselves a complete surrender to God and Christ, but most of them seemed disposed to plan for a compromise. Those who make up that class can only be led to make a wholehearted surrender of themselves to God and Christ by *the power of strong conviction*. This will become more evident when we consider a few instances.

Many years ago several school-girls were talking about religion, and what church they intended to join. After various questions had been asked and answered, one of them expressed a preference for a certain church. When inquired of for her reason for such a preference she answered, "That church does not think there is any harm in dancing, and I like to dance." This answer from that school-girl clearly showed that she desired to reach heaven, but preferred the church which would allow her the liberty to dance, and thus allow her to have a CORNER in her vow of allegiance to God and Christ. Many others have the same idea in regard to dancing, card-playing, theater-going, attending horse-races, going to pool-rooms, and even drinking drunk-making drinks. They wish to get to heaven, but on the compromised line of life.

Then there are others who specially wish a compromise in regard to doctrine. But whether the compromise is desired in regard to doctrine or practice, or both, yet all who make up that class certainly do not wish to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. Many of them do not wish to serve Him half-heartedly, but wish to gain an entrance into the everlasting kingdom on terms of their own choosing, in some measure or degree. In opposition to all this we learn that God does not propose

any second place for himself, nor for his Son, in any human mind or heart. They both deserve the first place, and require that mankind shall have for them WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION, without any CORNER reserved in their hearts.

But let us consider another instance. Many years ago a certain man went to an elder of a certain church and stated that he wanted to be baptized. "But," said he, "I would like to inquire whether if I join this church it would have any objection to my playing an occasional game of cards?" When informed that the church would object to card-playing on his part, if he would unite with it, he turned from it, and never asked to be baptized. That man desired to get to heaven, but on a COMPROMISED line. He wished to have a CORNER in his vow of allegiance which would allow him to shuffle the paste-boards, and waste his time in dealing them out, and playing them to his heart's content. That man and his brother were the gamblers of the community in which they lived, and he was devoted to the card-table. Many others, even many who profess to be Christians, have the same weakness. Unfortunately for them many churches allow members who play cards, dance, go to theaters, attend base-ball games, and pool rooms, and drink intoxicants, to remain connected with them. In order to have a large membership they wink at such practices, even if they do not openly endorse them. All such churches have a CORNER in their vow of allegiance to God and Christ. Most of them have many such corners, and the danger is that the Lord regards them as *made up of corners*. They allow their members to engage in so many evil practices that their so-called "liberty" has become license to do wrong, and they differ very little from common worldlings

Then there are many who have corners in their religious vows for telling business lies, while others have corners for social lies, and a host of others have such corners for political lies. One man misrepresents goods that he offers for sale, another does the same in regard to the time he will pay for that which he buys. One has a corner in his religious vow that will allow him to lean over a fence, and tell from one to a dozen lies in regard to a horse trade, or cattle trade, or a swine trade. Another has reserved a corner for telling lies in regard to his prospects for paying his debts. Then, in the social circle, one woman tells another that she is glad to see her when she is not, or that she wishes she would stay longer when she is anxious for her to leave. Thus the corners are reserved, and in every instance of that kind wholehearted devotion to God and Christ is not considered. The whole pretension is a compromise, if not an evident sham. But, in all ages, God has required that mankind shall serve him **WHOLEHEARTEDLY**.

And why should He not thus require? He certainly has the right to do so because of all that he has done for mankind in creation, in providence, and in redemption. In creation He bestowed on man his own image, even his own likeness, and made him ruler over all the lower orders of creation, even giving him dominion over the entire earth. In providence He has watched over the entire race in goodness and mercy, and even his severe judgments on the wicked have been inflicted in mercy. Then in redemption He gave his only Son to die for a fallen and sinful race, in order to open up a way for the salvation of all mankind from the power of the grave, and save all those with an eternal salvation who would obey him. See 1st Corinthians 15: 21, 22,

Hebrews 5: 8, 9. In view of all this He has the right to ask, REQUIRE, and even DEMAND, that all who would live with him forever should serve him WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

God and Christ have set an example of wholeheartedness. If God had not loved mankind wholeheartedly he would not have given Christ to die for them. If the Lord Jesus Christ had not loved mankind wholeheartedly he would not have given himself to die in their behalf. Then the apostles, and others of the New Testament church, have set such an example for us. All who exposed themselves to death, or to any degree of persecution, and showed that their devotion to Christ was such that they did not count their lives dear unto themselves, showed WHOLEHEARTEDNESS. The same was true of the Old Testament prophets, and has been true of all those, this side of the apostles, who have suffered death for the gospel's sake. In view of all these examples we who now live certainly have the greatest reasons, and the greatest number of reasons; for being WHOLEHEARTED in our devotion to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is this all. The only way for Christians to be happy is to be wholehearted Christians. If they be half-hearted they cannot rejoice in the Lord always, neither can they rejoice in the practices of the world, as worldlings do. Lukewarm professors of religion are unhappy as religious characters and unhappy as worldlings. The wholehearted worldling has more enjoyment than the half-hearted religionist. Even in earthward lines of business, and other relations, wholeheartedness is necessary in order to have enjoyment. A half-hearted merchant, or school-teacher, or mechanic, cannot enjoy his business. In the marriage relation

the same is true. A half-hearted husband, or wife, is not happy. This needs only to be stated in order to be understood and admitted, by all who have had experience in that relation.

In view of all this we can see two reasons for wholeheartedness in devotion to God and Christ. The first is that God requires it, and the second is that our own happiness requires it. Yes, and a third reason is that our own safety requires it. The attractions of this world will test us, seriously, even if we be wholehearted, and they will test us more seriously if we be lukewarm, or only half-hearted. Therefore, because God requires it, and our own happiness requires it, and our own safety requires it, we should all be **WHOLEHEARTED CHRISTIANS**.

Is some one now ready to say, that if we be wholehearted we need not be particular about items of doctrine, nor about names, nor church-membership? There are many who have this idea. They say, "We need not be particular about the church we join, the name we wear, the creed we adopt, the form of baptism we accept, nor the form of worship that we use—*if our hearts are right*." They even say, "It does not make a particle of difference whether we use instrumental music in worship, nor whether we adopt man-made societies in our work, nor whether we make use of festivals, and fairs, and funny lectures, to raise money for the church—*if our hearts are only right*." In answer to all this we should say, It does not make any difference to us about such matters if our hearts are **NOT RIGHT**. But just as soon as our hearts get **RIGHT**, then we will be careful about **ALL THESE QUESTIONS**. The expression, "It does not make any difference," or, "It makes no difference," is the expression of a careless mind and

heart, and such a condition of mind and heart NEVER WAS, and NEVER WILL BE right before God. Just as soon as the mind and heart—the thoughts and affections—of mankind are RIGHT toward God, then they are FILLED WITH CARE to do God's will just as he desires it. This needs only to be stated in order to be understood and admitted. A careless or indifferent heart in a child toward a parent is certainly not a right heart. Children that have right hearts toward their parents will always be careful to do that which will please them. The same is true of mankind toward God.

An illustration will make this plain. In a certain family are three sons. The eldest is twenty-five years of age, and the two younger sons are twelve and fourteen. The father and his eldest son intend to go on a journey. Before leaving home the father calls his younger sons to him and tells them that he wishes them to do certain work in course of his absence. He gives them clear instructions in regard to it. Then the eldest son goes out into the field and shows them how the father wishes the work done, by doing some of it in their presence. Then the father and his eldest son leave home, and the younger sons continue their work. After a time a man comes along and leans over the fence and says, "Boys, there is an easier way to do that work. That's the old-time way—the old foggy way. People will laugh at you if you will do your work in that way." Then he proceeds to tell them of the new way—the popular way—the shorter way—the easier way. When he ends his speech on the subject the older son says to him, "Mister, what you say may be true; but my father has TOLD me to do this work this way, and my elder brother has

SHOWN me that this is the way my father wishes this work to be done, and I intend to do my part of it as my father has told me, and as my older brother has shown me." But the younger son says, "I believe I'll try the short-hand method, for I don't wish to be laughed at." As a result, when the father of those sons will return he will find that the work which he ordered his sons to do will have been done in two very different ways. Now which of those two sons will he regard as having the right kind of a heart toward him? A child of five years of age can answer this question aright.

Now, let us consider that our divine Father has many sons. The eldest has always been obedient to Him, but this is not true of all his younger sons, or professed sons, with whom we are numbered. But He has told us, in the gospel, what he desires that we shall do, and his eldest Son, our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, has shown us how to obey the Father, and we begin to obey him. But a certain man leans over the fence, or over the pulpit, and tells us there is a shorter, and easier, and more popular, way to do what the Father has required. We listen to him and when he ends his speech on the subject some of us say to him, "Sir, that which you say about this work may be true, but our divine Father has TOLD us to do this work this way, and our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, has SHOWN us that this is the way to obey the Father and please him. Therefore, we intend to do OUR PART of this work just as our Father has TOLD us, and as our elder Brother has SHOWN us." But another part of the professed sons, or professed children, of God, after listening to the man in the pulpit, say, "We will venture to try the short-hand method—the easy method—and risk displeasing our Father. He is kind and good, and

does not wish his children to be laughed at. Besides, if we do this work in the easiest way we shall have more time for some other good work. And, so, if there is anything wrong with this we will balance it by some good work in some other direction."

Now which of these two classes of professed children of God will be well-pleasing to the Divine Father, and which of them will be regarded as having the RIGHT KIND OF A HEART towards him? This question can be answered by a child five years old. Certainly all who are old enough to be responsible before the common law can judge that only those will be well-pleasing to God who do his will *just as he has commanded*. They can judge that all who try to serve God by some compromised method, according to the suggestions of men, and in order to be popular—like other people who compromise in religious affairs—*have not a right heart before God*.

In view of all this we may safely say that the doctrine which teaches that if our hearts are right it does not make any difference what church we join, what name we wear, how we are baptized, what creed we adopt, whether we use instrumental music in worship, or man-made societies in church work, or make appeals to the world for money to help the church—we may say that such a doctrine is the *very reverse of truth*. It does not make any difference about such things if our hearts are NOT RIGHT. But just as soon as our hearts get RIGHT before God then we are very careful to learn the Lord's will, and to do it *exactly as he requires*. All carelessness and indifference, about learning and doing the divine commands, will then be banished from the mind and heart.

Many professed Christians seem to think that every

sincere heart is right before God, and that all that sincere people do in religious matters will be acceptable to God. But this is a mistake — *a gross and grievous mistake*. The wisest monarch of Israel said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14: 12.) To this he added, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." (Proverbs 28: 26.) Another Old Testament writer said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17: 9.) In the light of such declarations in the Old Testament we ought to be prepared to accept the teaching of the New on this subject.

Then let us learn what the Savior has set forth that bears on this subject. In Matthew 7: 21-23 He declares, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

We ought not to question the sincerity of those of whom the Savior spoke in the speech that we have just repeated. And certainly we should not question the sincerity of Paul when he was persecuting the church of Christ. He afterwards said of himself, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them. And I punished them

often in every synagogue; and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." See Acts 26: 9-11. But all this that man did "in good conscience," as he declares in Acts 23: 1. In the light of all this, who can honestly conclude that sincerity will decide the question of acceptance with God, and that a sincere heart is a RIGHT heart before God, just because it is SINCERE?

But there are many who think that a ZEALOUS heart is right before God, and that God will accept persons who are religiously zealous even if they be religiously wrong. But the case of Saul of Tarsus ought to settle this question. He was very zealous for the traditions of his fathers. In Galatians 1: 14 he declared that he was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions" of his fathers. Besides, in Romans 10: 2 Paul says of the unbelieving Jews, who were under condemnation of God, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." To this he adds, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." From such declarations we must conclude that mankind may be very zealous in religion without having a right heart before God. A sincere heart is not acceptable if it accepts what is wrong, and the same is true of a zealous heart. *Sincerity cannot change an error into a truth in spiritual affairs any more than in material affairs.* If a man drinks poison sincerely thinking that it is a wholesome mixture, his sincerity will not annul the poison, and prevent it from damaging him. On the same principle it is true that if a man sincerely accepts a falsehood in religion, thinking it is a truth, his

sincerity will not change the falsehood into a truth. The same is true in regard to ZEAL. If a man zealously digs for water in the wrong place he will not find it because of his ZEAL. On the same principle, if he zealously seeks salvation by doing the wrong acts he will not find it because he sought it with ZEAL.

A right heart before God must be sincere, and it must be zealous, but, besides all this it must be CAREFUL. This means that it must be filled with reverence, and humility, so as to be careful about all that God requires—careful to learn his commands, and careful to do them. In view of all this we may safely say that all divisions, strifes, and contentions, in the religious world, have their existence because mankind are not wholehearted in their devotion to God and Christ. Those who differ from God's word have not tried wholeheartedly to learn all that it requires of them. When they repent of their lukewarmness, and carelessness, in regard to studying the word of God, especially the gospel of Christ, then, and not till then, will they show that their hearts are right before God. Then, and not till then, will they show that they love God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind. But such love, such degree of devotion, is necessary in order that we may find acceptance with God and Christ while we live, when we shall be brought down to death, and when we shall appear in the final judgment. Therefore we should all be careful to avoid all trifling in regard to the gospel of Christ, and should be wholehearted in obeying all that it requires of us in both doctrine and practice.

SERMON NO. XVI

THE SPECIAL DEGREE AND PURITY OF FAITH WHICH GOD REQUIRES OF HIS PEOPLE

By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11: 8.

THE Bible informs us that faith and belief are the same. This is clear from the fact that they are produced by the same testimony, and everything which is promised in the Bible to those who BELIEVE is promised to those who HAVE FAITH, and everything which is promised to those who HAVE FAITH is promised to those who BELIEVE. For instance, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20: 30, 31.) Then, in Acts 14: 1, we read of Paul and Barnabas, "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together in the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."

Here we find that the record of Christ's miracles was written to cause persons to believe, and when Paul and Barnabas spoke in the hearing of the people in the

synagogue in Iconium many were led to believe. Thus belief, or believing, is produced by both reading and hearing. See also the instance of the Jews, as recorded in Acts 4: 5, and the instance of the Bereans as recorded in Acts 17: 10-12. In the former instance, belief was produced by hearing, and in the latter by hearing and searching the scriptures. Then we find that "life" is to be received by believing (John 20: 30, 31), and in Romans 5: 1 we learn that "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Those who have life through believing are justified, and those who are justified have life through Christ. Faith and belief are therefore the same.

There is a degree of belief or faith, produced by the word of God, which is not sufficient to save. In John 12: 42, 43 we read this: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Certainly the degree of faith in those chief rulers, of whom we have just read, was not sufficient to save them. It was not sufficient to overcome their love of popularity among men. It was not wholehearted, but was faith only, or faith alone, for it was faith without obedience. It was right in *KIND*, but not right in *DEGREE*. In James 2: 14-26 we learn that such faith is dead because it is alone. The Apostle James ends his testimony on the subject by declaring, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." In view of all this we can understand that those make a serious mistake who teach that mankind are justified by *FAITH ONLY*, even as those do who teach that faith and belief are *DIFFERENT*. Both classes of teachers

"do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

Some suppose that in Romans 4: 1-5 Paul teaches the doctrine of justification by faith without works of obedience which God has commanded. But his reference to Abraham rules out such a supposition, for Abraham's history shows that he obeyed in everything that God commanded him. In Romans 4: 1-5 Paul wrote with reference to works of MERIT, such as would bring God in "debt" to the worker, and he informs us that Abraham did not perform any works of that kind. The Jews were trying to obtain salvation by doing works, which God did not require of them, and at the same time were refusing to learn and believe and obey the gospel. This is evident from Romans 10: 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Therefore those are seriously in error who conclude that faith without obedience ever was acceptable to God in any instance that obedience was required. The unbelieving Jews refused to learn the gospel requirements, but tried to be saved by doing that which the Lord did not require of them, even as many religious persons are now doing.

Many have concluded that mankind are justified by faith ONLY, or faith ALONE, because of the Savior's saying in John 3: 16, and other scriptures of similar import. Christ said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Because belief, or faith, is here mentioned without mention of repentance, confession, or baptism, many have concluded that mankind may be justified by faith ONLY.

Then they turn to Romans 5: 1, and read, "being justified by faith," and seem to think that their conclusion is established. All such are to be pitied. They do not know how to read the Bible. If faith without mention of anything else means FAITH ONLY, then repentance without mention of anything else means REPENTANCE ONLY, and baptism without mention of anything else means BAPTISM ONLY. In Acts 11: 18 we read of "repentance unto life" without mention of faith, confession, baptism, or prayer. Then, in 1st Peter 3: 21, we read, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." But shall we conclude that any one can be saved by repentance ONLY, or by baptism ONLY? No. Yet such a conclusion is not more contrary to reason and scripture than is the conclusion that faith without mention of anything else means FAITH ONLY, or FAITH ALONE. We might as well reason that calling on the Lord ALONE, or by itself, without any other obedience, will save us because, in Acts 2: 21, we find the statement, "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But all such reasoning is pitiable. It reveals dense ignorance of the close connection which exists between all the scriptures, especially between all that bear on any particular question.

Mention should be made that Martin Luther, in his translation of Romans 3: 28, declares that we are justified "by faith only." But such a translation is a contradiction of the second chapter of James, and is a blot on Luther's honesty.

In Hebrews 5: 9 we read of Christ, "And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The expression "eternal salvation" in this scripture is equal to "everlasting

life" in John 3: 16. This being true we must consider them together, and accept all that they both declare. We must BELIEVE in Christ and must OBEY him. We cannot believe aright and refuse to OBEY, any more than we can obey aright if we refuse to BELIEVE.

But this is not all. The entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews was intended to show what faith, or belief, really is. In the beginning of that chapter Paul declares what faith is, and then proceeds to show what it IS by declaring what it HAS DONE. In so doing he shows that acceptable faith—the special degree of faith which God is pleased with in his people—is living, active, and humble, and has shown itself in living, active, and humble, obedience. Paul begins his instances of faith in the mentioned chapter by reference to the case of Abel, who was Adam's second son, and he passes onward to the faith shown by certain captive Jews in Babylon. In every instance, in which he mentions faith, it did that which the Lord required in order to make itself evident, or to show its real existence. By reason of all this, we may safely say that the conclusion that such faith as is acceptable to God can exist as a MERE THEORY, and without the OBEDIENCE that God requires, is astonishing, especially when such conclusion is held by men and women who, on other questions, are intelligent. The idea of a miracle of blindness, in those who accept such a conclusion, is suggested.

Does some one say that Jesus once said to a man "only believe?" Yes, in Mark 5: 36 we learn that Jesus did say to the ruler of the synagogue who had besought him to heal his daughter, "Be not afraid, only believe." But that was not in regard to salvation, nor anything else in which the ruler was required to do anything.

Therefore the words of Jesus, in that instance, do not apply to any one who desires to be saved from sins.

Now we are prepared to consider the value of a mixed faith. Thus far we have considered a SMALL DEGREE of pure faith, but attention is now invited to a MIXED FAITH. Many professed Christians say that they will do whatever they can see a reason for doing, but that which they cannot see a reason for doing they regard as not necessary. What they think they can see a reason for doing they say is ESSENTIAL, but all else is NOT ESSENTIAL. Thus they decide that faith, and repentance, and confession of faith, and prayer are necessary to salvation, but water baptism, the communion, and wearing the name of Christ, they regard as not necessary. The requirements of the gospel are, thus, divided by them into ESSENTIALS and NON-ESSENTIALS. This division is based on their own ideas of seeing a reason, or not seeing a reason. Such a basis, or foundation, for a division of gospel requirements is made because of a lack of pure faith.

Those who make such a division are very likely without the slightest vestige of pure faith. They measure the value of gospel requirements by their own reason, and NOT by the channel through which they come, NOR by their authorship. That GOD has spoken to them, and has spoken THROUGH CHRIST, and has spoken to them IN THE BIBLE, does not have any weight with them. But that which they think they can see a REASON for they say is ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION, while that which they think they cannot see a REASON for they say is NON-ESSENTIAL. Then their own REASON, and not DIVINE AUTHORITY, is the basis of their religious life!

But is not such reasoning pure rationalism, and are

not all who make such a division of divine commands RATIONALISTS rather than true BELIEVERS? This is a serious question, and deserves to be most seriously considered. The rationalist says, that he does not accept anything which he cannot understand. For that reason he says he rejects miracles, for he cannot understand them. He says it is contrary to reason for any one to pass through fire without having a hair singed, or his clothing scorched, and for that reason he rejects the story of the Hebrews who were cast into a heated furnace. On the same principle he reasons in regard to all the miracles recorded in the Bible. He says, likewise, that it is contrary to reason to suppose that a kind and gracious being, such as the God of the Bible is said to be, would cause man's salvation to depend upon rules of faith, which the rationalist speaks of as "dogmatic theology." To this he adds that whatever he can see through, or understand the reason for, he is willing to accept, but not that which requires of him what he calls "a blind faith."

Now, what is the difference between the RATIONALIST who thus reasons, and the religionist who thus reasons? *In principle they are the same.* They both accept that which seems REASONABLE to them, and reject that which seems CONTRARY to their REASON. The only difference is, that the professed rationalist extends his reasoning to miracles, as well as to commands, while the professed religionist confines it to commands. They are both PURE RATIONALISTS, and do not deserve credit for the SLIGHTEST VESTIGE OF PURE FAITH. This will become more clear through an illustration of a father and his son.

A certain father intended to leave home. But before leaving he called his son to him and said, "My son,

I wish you to do ten things for me while I shall be away, and in order that you may not forget any one of them I have written them all in plain words for you." Then the father handed to his son a sheet of paper on which all was written that he wished him to do in course of his absence, and after that went away. The son proceeded to do all that his father had set forth on the sheet of paper handed to him. When his father returned he called his son to him and inquired whether he had done all that he found recorded on the paper he had given to him. The son said he had done everything. Then the father inquired whether he could see any use in doing ALL that he found set forth on the mentioned paper. "No," said the son, "I could not. Several things you wrote on that paper I couldn't see any use in—they seemed useless, and even foolish, if you will allow me to speak that way to you." "Then WHY did you do them?" inquired the father. "*Just because you told me to do them,*" said the son. This illustrates PURE FAITH, and the RIGHT DEGREE of pure faith. The son did not consult his own reason, nor wishes, but obeyed his father because he had confidence in him, and believed he had the right to command his son to do whatever he desired him to do. This illustrates the pure faith and that degree of pure faith which God requires of his people, and all that would be his people.

But suppose that when the father, of whom mention has been made, returned, and inquired of his son, whether he had done all that was set forth on the paper handed to him, he had received a negative answer. Suppose that the son had said, "No, father, I didn't do ALL I found written on the paper because I couldn't see any use in doing ALL. There are some things mentioned on that paper that I couldn't see any use in, and

so I didn't do them. I couldn't see through them—they seemed foolish to me, and so I thought they were not necessary." Such an answer, from the mentioned son to his father, illustrates PURE RATIONALISM as found in the professed rationalist, and in many professed religionists. It illustrates the condition of mind in all who measure the value of God's commands by their OWN REASON—their OWN SENSE OF PROPRIETY—their OWN IDEAS OF RIGHT. If they have any faith in God it is mixed with reason, and thus is not pure faith—is not the kind that God requires of his people. Yet this is the very kind that is found in all who reject miracles because they cannot see through them, and the kind that all those have who say that water baptism is not necessary to the salvation of alien sinners, and that the communion is not necessary to be attended to, and especially not necessary every first day of the week. It is, likewise, the kind of faith that is found in all those who say they cannot see any use in being particular about names, even the names which God caused his people to wear and recorded in his Book.

But suppose that when the mentioned father returned from his absence, and inquired of his son about his obedience, he had received this answer: "No, father, I did not get through with all that you told me to do, though I intended to do so. Some things that you told me to do I found were so VERY IMPORTANT that I spent nearly all my time doing them. I think I have done them very well—a little better than you ever did them yourself." This kind of an answer, by the mentioned son, would illustrate those religionists who are technical in their reasoning and magnify something they call "the design of baptism" so much that they have but little time to talk about repentance and a godly life.

They consult their own reason, and measure the value of certain divine commands by their own reason as a standard of measurement. As a result, instead of doing ALL that the Lord commands, and giving due attention to ALL his requirements, they magnify the value of a pure doctrine so that they make it impure by their extreme notions, and do not have time nor disposition to consider the importance of a pure life. By consulting their own reason, as a standard of measuring, they learn to hate error more than they love truth—they hate an error in DOCTRINE more than they love PURITY OF LIFE. Such conduct illustrates another phase of rationalism, or measuring by reason, instead of measuring by the divine word.

Finally, suppose that the mentioned son, when inquired of by his father in regard to his obedience, had said, "Yes, father, I did all you commanded me, and a GREAT DEAL MORE. You did not give me enough to do to keep me busy. Besides, I tried some NEW WAYS of doing some things that you told me to do, and I think I have made some IMPROVEMENTS on your ways." Suppose that the mentioned father had inspected that son's work, and had found that he had slighted all that he had told him to do, and had even varied from the established way of doing some things. What would he have thought of such conduct on the part of his son? To say the least he would have regarded him as lacking pure faith, lacking reverence for his father, and as showing a great deal of presumption. He would have regarded him as guilty of acting according to his own reason, rather than according to a pure and whole-hearted faith in his father. Yet such conduct, on the part of a son toward his father, illustrates the conduct of certain religionists. They slight faith, and slight

repentance; they slight the importance of confession of faith, also the importance of water baptism. They slight the importance of the Lord's day worship, the importance of studying the Bible, and of keeping the life unspotted from the world. They disregard the Savior's prayer for the oneness of his believers, and for the sake of making a SHOW OF SUCCESS they do many things which the Lord has not required, and which result in the division of those who believe in him. All this, and more, they do, because, as they say, "We can't see any HARM in these things." Thus, while professed rationalists, and many professed Christians, reject certain parts of the Bible because they "can't see through them," or "can't see any use in them," these religionists adopt many things that Christ never required because they "can't see any harm in them." *This is another phase of rationalism.* Those guilty of it are not controlled by pure faith in God and Christ, nor by reverence for God and his word. On the contrary, they are controlled by their OWN REASON. They do that which SEEMS RIGHT in their own eyes, or appears reasonable to their own understanding. *They have a mixed faith.*

Now we are prepared to consider James 2: 10, 11. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Here we learn that the reason of the doctrine, that whoever offends in one point is guilty of all, is found in the fact that the same authority by which one point of the law has been given is the authority by which all the other points have been given. Therefore, whoever offends in one

point of law offends the authority by which that point has been given, and that is the authority by which all the other points have been given.

In view of all this, the son who does not obey in one point of his father's law because he "can't see any use in it" should never receive credit for any obedience that he renders to his father. The explanation is this: The same reasoning by which such a son justifies himself in disobeying one point of his father's law would, if always adopted, justify him in disobeying in all other points of that law. On the same principle the son who magnifies one point of his father's law, because he thinks it is more important than others, and dwells on that point so that he overlooks, or ignores, the importance of certain other points, should not receive credit for any obedience to his father. And, why? Simply because the same reasoning by which such a son justifies himself in dwelling on one point so that he overlooks the importance of others, at one time, may be used so as to justify him, in his own estimation, in doing the same with reference to all other points of his father's law. He is governed by his own reason rather than by his father's authority.

Finally, the son who slights much, or all, that his father commands him to do, and then occupies himself in doing that which his father never required of him, because he can't see ANY HARM in so doing, because he wishes to make a show of success, or for some other reason, should not receive credit for obedience to his father. And, why? Simply because he is not controlled by his father's AUTHORITY, nor is he satisfied with his father's WILL. But he will slight his father's requirements, and will be diligent to do much that his father never intimated should be done,

But whatever we may think of such a father, in refusing to give such a son credit for obedience to him in any respect, yet God will refuse to give us credit for obeying him in a dozen points, or more, of his law, if we refuse to obey him, or trifle with him, in even one point of his law. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." This does not refer to being "overtaken in a fault," for provision is made for such an offense. See Galatians 6: 1. But reference is made to that kind of an offense which disregards divine authority, and goes beyond it, and which makes the one who is guilty of it "a transgressor." The meaning of the word "transgressor" is explained in John's second letter and ninth verse. The Apostle John there says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." All who transgress the divine law cease to abide in Christ, and turn from God. Those who are satisfied with the doctrine of Christ abide in it, and, therefore, are not disposed to transgress it. If they are overtaken in faults they repent of them and find acceptance again in the divine sight. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1st John 1: 9.)

Now we are prepared to consider the degree and purity of Abraham's faith, as set forth in the scripture chosen as the text for this sermon. "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." According to this statement of Paul, Abraham's faith was of the RIGHT KIND and the RIGHT DEGREE. It was PURE, and was SUFFICIENT. He "obeyed," not because he

SAW any sense in going out into a strange country, away from his kindred, nor because he could see any REASON in it. But he "obeyed," and "he went out, not knowing whither he went." He did not know, but he was sure God knew, and that was sufficient for him.

The entire history of Abraham is in harmony with the statement that Paul here makes of him. He obeyed all of God's commands to the utmost that God required, or that his mercy would permit. He could not SEE any use in preparing five different kinds of animals as God required, and of which we find a record in Genesis 15: 9, 10, yet he prepared them. Neither could he SEE any use in circumcision of which we read in Genesis 17: 9-14. Yet he proceeded to obey God's command with reference to it without complaint, and without delay. The same was true in regard to God's command that he should offer his son Isaac for a burnt offering, on a certain mountain in a certain land, as we read of that command in Genesis 22: 1, 2. Yet we are informed that he proceeded, without delay, to do that which the Lord had commanded, and that he went as far in obeying the divine command as God's mercy would permit. Thus he went out from Ur of the Chaldees and into the land of Canaan "not knowing whither he went;" and he prepared five different kinds of animals "not knowing" what it meant for him to do so; and he attended to the circumcision of himself, with all other males of his household, "not knowing" its advantage, and finally, he went, as far as God would permit, toward offering his son Isaac on an altar "not knowing" what its outworkings, or its reward, would be. He had PURE FAITH, and enough of it, to meet God's good pleasure. Since Abraham's faith was shown, the worshippers of God have been worthy of

being regarded as Abraham's children in proportion as they have shown a similar faith.

Multitudes declare that if they only have "Abrahamic faith" they can be saved, regardless of the doctrine they accept, the church they join, the baptism they submit to, or the name they wear. All who thus declare show that they have not the FIRST IDEA of the purity and strength of Abraham's faith. The faith that Abraham had did not suffer him to talk carelessly about any of God's requirements. On the contrary, it caused him to be careful in regard to them all, and to obey them all with care. This is exactly that which all who would be worthy of being called Abraham's children must do. By reason of his faith Abraham is declared to be "the father of all them that believe," and "the father of us all." (Romans 4: 11, 16). And we are his children only in proportion as we show the PURITY of faith, and the DEGREE of faith, which he showed.

Multitudes talk and write about "faith only," or "faith alone," and declare that they have been justified by faith without works. When pressed for scripture in behalf of such a doctrine they sometimes refer to Romans 3: 28, in which Paul stated, "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." But the word "law" in that statement refers to the Jewish law, and does not have reference to any command of the gospel. This will be clear to all who will study the connection, which shows that Paul was reasoning against Christians depending on the Jewish law for justification. In the sixth chapter of this same letter Paul showed that obedience to Christ, even obedience in baptism, is necessary in order to salvation. In Romans 6: 17, 18 he shows that heartfelt obedience is necessary, even to a "form of doctrine."

But those who contend for salvation by "faith only" show, as soon as they are confronted by a command that must be obeyed by "faith only," that they do not understand what "faith only" really means. For, they say, individually, "I can see WHY I should believe, and repent, and confess; therefore, I regard these requirements as ESSENTIAL. But, for the life of me, I can't see WHY I should go down into the water and be baptized, and, for that reason I regard it as NON-essential." To this they sometimes add, "I can't see why I should commune every first day of the week, nor WHY I can't wear any religious name I see fit, and be a member of any church I see fit to join; therefore, I regard the weekly communion and the question of any particular church membership, as NON-essentials." Thus we see that just as soon as the advocates of "faith only" are confronted by that which must be attended to by "faith only," because they cannot see any reason for it, they "draw back." By so doing they bring themselves under the condemnation of Hebrews 10: 38, 39. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." To this Paul adds, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Yet all the advocates of "faith only" "draw back," and Paul implies that they "draw back unto perdition." The rule is, that those who talk about being saved by "faith only" do not know what is meant by "faith only." Abraham showed "faith only" or was moved by "faith alone," when he obeyed God without having the slightest information in regard to God's reasons for requiring him to obey the commands that he gave to him. But the "faith-only" people of modern times "draw back" every time they come to a commandment of God which

they need to obey without explanation, or without being able to see any reason for it. Such people seem not to understand what REAL faith—PURE faith—UNMIXED faith—really is, nor what it would cause them to do if they would be controlled by it. Faith ONLY is not faith WITHOUT OBEDIENCE, but faith WITHOUT EXPLANATION OR REASON FOR OBEDIENCE.

A farmer sometimes says, "While I have plenty of corn in my cribs, and especially if my growing crop promises well, I can have strong faith that I am going to get along all right. But when my corn gets low in the crib, and especially when the dry weather, or wet weather, strikes my growing crop unfavorably, my faith becomes pretty weak, I tell you." Then a working man, in some other department of life, sometimes says, "While I keep my health, and work is plenty, I can have faith that I am going to get along. But when the rheumatism strikes me, as it did a few years ago, or when work gets scarce, I tell you that my faith gets quite weak."

Men who talk after that manner don't know what the word "faith" means. They mistake earthward confidence, based on earthly prospects, for faith in God. While our earthward prospects are bright we are not so much required to exercise faith that God will take care of us. But when earthward prospects become gloomy, and especially when they fail entirely, then the time is at hand for the exercise of faith in God's care. What would we think of a man who says that he can always be patient till something goes wrong? But that kind of a speech is not more absurd than for a man to say that he can have faith till prospects become gloomy!

Faith and sense do not belong to the same domain.

Neither do faith and reason belong to the same domain. The confidence which sense gives, or which reason gives, does not touch the confidence which faith gives. On the contrary, where sense and reason are exhausted, and fail to give the slightest ground for confidence, there faith begins. Its domain is above and beyond the sphere where sense and reason dwell.

"What is faith in God?" A little girl was asked this question, and she answered, "It's taking God at his word." That little girl certainly had the right idea. Faith in God is taking God at his word, and it requires that those who have it shall do exactly as he commands, and, then, believe his promises without the slightest doubt.

Let us consider the care which God has exercised that we might have faith that does not stagger, nor falter, nor waver, nor in any other way change. In Hebrews 6: 16-18 we read this: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Imagination itself cannot go further. God swore by himself in order to show the constancy of his purpose in regard to Abraham and his descendants. All that God promised to Abraham in regard to his fleshly descendants has been fulfilled, and a record of its fulfillment has been made "for our learning." By reading that record we can be fully assured that everything he has promised to Abraham's spiritual descendants—his children by faith—will be fulfilled. There-

fore, "Let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus wrote the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6: 9, and in Romans 8: 38, 39. In these assurances we find great reasons for comfort. But in the oath of God to Abraham we find the greater reason for the "strong consolation" which should, at all times, banish all doubt from the hearts of all those who are wholehearted believers in God and Christ.

Certain tourists were among the Alpine mountains. Their guide had his son with them—a little boy of eight or ten years of age. One of the tourists looked over a precipice and saw some flowers growing out of a crevice in a rock, or, perhaps, on a little mound of earth on a rock. He wished to get them, and asked his guide's little boy if he would allow them to put a rope around him under his arms, and swing him down, so that he could get those flowers, promising to pay him for so doing. His prompt reply was, "I will if you will let my father hold the rope." How precious must have been the faith of that child to his father's heart. He did not care about the empty space, nor the rough rocks, that would be beneath him, if his father would hold the rope that would be about him. Such is the faith, and degree of faith, which our heavenly Father desires that we shall have in him. He holds the rope of divine promises, which all Christians have about them, and he will not let it go, neither will the rope break. To his ancient people God said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deu-

teronomy 33: 27.) The Jews learned the value of this assurance during the entire time of their obedience to God, for then God took care of them. They learned it, likewise, when they persisted in disobeying Him, for then he gave them into the hands of their enemies.

A Scotch woman who obeyed God, and trusted him with the "full assurance of faith," was often visited by a young preacher. She told him of her joys, comforts, and consolations, for, though an invalid, yet she was very happy in the divine promises. One day the young preacher ventured to suggest the possibility that she might be lost, even after all her obedience and hopes. She turned upon him with a sharp voice for an invalid to use, and said, "Is that all the far ye hae got, mon?" By this question she meant, Is that all the progress you have made, man? or, Is that all you have learned? Then she went on to state that for her to lose her soul would be a great loss, but God would be the greater loser, for he would lose his honor. She said that his honor was bound up in his promises, and as he could not afford to lose his honor she would not be suffered to lose her soul. Her faith was pure, and was sufficient. *It was of the right kind, and of the right degree.* It was a wholehearted faith. This is the faith that God requires. It is the faith that pleases Him, and must be exercised by all who shall be heirs of salvation.

In order to develop such faith in Christians God subjects them to trial. The end in view is expressed, in 1st Peter 1: 7, in these words: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." All Christians should remember this. The Lord intends to accomplish an end by subjecting

his people to trials which cannot be accomplished in any other way.

A soldier was dying. His chaplain thought he ought to ask him about his spiritual condition, and so he inquired, "What is your profession?" "I profess to be a Christian," was the dying man's answer. "But of what PERSUASION are you?" inquired the chaplain. "I am persuaded," was the soldier's answer, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This was sufficient for that chaplain. He did not inquire further, neither did he feel in doubt about the dying man's welfare. He had heard from that soldier of full confidence in God and Christ without creeds or confessions of faith, and that was sufficient. Such was the confidence of Paul, as he expressed it in the last of the eighth chapter of Romans, and such should be the confidence of all Christians. When Paul came near to the close of his life he wrote thus in the last chapter of his second letter to Timothy: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Such an ending of life is beyond comparison with all earthly glory. Men have sometimes ridden on the topmost wave of success in course of their earthly career, but have felt disappointed at the close of life. And thus it will be with all who make earthly glory the

chief pursuit of their life. But those who show the faith of Abraham will not be disappointed, nor will they feel afraid, when they will come to the end of their days. On the contrary, they will say with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod, and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23: 4.)

With this end in view, or in order to come to the end of life after this grand and glorious manner, every sinner should repent, and confess, and be baptized, as the gospel requires; and every Christian should strive to live unspotted from the world. In doctrine and practice, in worship and work, every Christian should endeavor to "speak as the oracles of God," and maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Pride, love of popularity, desire for a show of success, should be banished from the heart of every Christian. All preferences which will cause strife and division among Christ's followers should be avoided, and will be avoided, by those who have a wholehearted faith in God and Christ. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," is the Savior's assurance in Revelation 2: 10, which all Christians should always remember. The promise is to the faithful, regardless of success before mankind. Therefore our whole life should be summed up in a wholehearted faith in God and our Lord Jesus Christ. When our faith is right, then we shall not find any difficulty in understanding the requirements of the gospel, and we shall not be ashamed to obey them.

SERMON NO. XVII

HOW CAN ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST BE UNITED?

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1st Peter 4: 11.

CHRIST intended that his church should convert sinners and perfect believers. This will be evident to all who read with care the prayer recorded in John 17: 20-23. The same idea will be further evident to all who read Paul's exhortation in 1st Corinthians 1: 10, also in Ephesians 4: 1-6. Besides, when certain Christians at Corinth began to call themselves after the names of certain preachers they were re-proved for so doing, and were charged with carnality, or fleshly-mindedness. This meant that they were charged with viewing the question of religion from a fleshly standpoint. See 1st Corinthians 3: 3, 4. From this we may learn that all others who call believers in Christ after men, or give them any other names of human origin, are guilty of carnality. And, this being true, the religious world, known as Christendom, is, quite generally, guilty of carnality, for it has adopted various names of human origin. What is worse, that part of the religious world seems to glory in those

names, and to be unwilling to give them up in order to be known only by divinely given names.

But the question before us is, How can all believers in Christ be united? The answer to this question is given in the words of the text chosen for this sermon. The Apostle Peter says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Here is the "measuring reed," as it may be called, of all names, doctrines and practices. "The oracles of God" are the Sacred Scriptures, and if every one who speaks, on the subject of religion, will always speak "as the oracles of God," then unity of speech will be assured. As a result of unity, or oneness, of speech certainly oneness of thought will be assured. This will mean oneness of name, doctrine, and practice. All who speak alike, will, in course of time, think alike, believe alike, decide alike, resolve alike, and act alike. Let us test this "measuring reed," and learn with certainty of its out-workings. But before so doing we should say, that to measure by the word of God does not mean that we may not, in talking about that word, use our own words. But it does mean that all our own words that we use in talking about the divine word should be used in view of all that the divine word says. Besides, our final decision should be always set forth in the exact language of that word. As a result we shall not convey any wrong idea. But now let us try the "measuring reed."

The followers of Christ were first called "disciples," then "Christians," then "saints," also "brethren." But the name "Christians" is the only one of these names that is peculiar to the New Testament. The name "disciples" is found in Isaiah 8: 16, and the name "saints" is found in Psalm 30: 4, and many other places in the Old Testament. The same is true, in some re-

spects, of the name "brethren." But we do not find the name "Christians" till we come to Acts 11: 26. Then we find it again in Acts 26: 28, and again in 1st Peter 4: 16. In the first of these several scriptures we find that, "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," and in the second that a certain king said to the Apostle Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." In the last of these scriptures we find that the Apostle Peter said, "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed."

Now suppose that all the preachers of all the religious denominations, of the so-called Christendom, would bind themselves to speak "as the oracles of God" in regard to the names of the followers of Christ. What would be the result? Certainly they would all speak the same things. In so doing they would all be perfectly united whenever they would make mention of the names of the followers of Christ. This would, in course of time, cause them to think alike in regard to them, for the name "Christian" certainly is plain, and easy to be understood. It is chiefly made up of the name "Christ," which means "anointed," and all Christians are, in a certain sense, anointed of God. The apostles, and other inspired ones, had a special anointing by the Holy Spirit. But all other Christians are, in a measure, anointed. The Apostle John said to Christians, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Though Christians have not unlimited knowledge, yet they are required to know all things that pertain to life and godliness, and to this the Apostle John must have referred. See 1st John 2: 20. All Christians are under the influence of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. In that sense all are anointed by the Spirit.

Now we are prepared to consider the names by which the oracles of God call the churches that were made up of Christians. We find that they were called "the church," "the churches," "the church of God," "the churches of Christ," "the church of the First Born." See Acts 2: 47; 9: 31; 20: 28, Romans 16: 16, Hebrews 12: 23. Now suppose that all the members of the churches of so-called Christendom, and all others who profess to be believers in Christ, would bind themselves to "speak as the oracles of God" in making mention of the names of the church which is made up of Christians. What would be the result? They would certainly speak the same thing—would use the same words in speaking of that church. This would, in course of time, cause them to think alike, and, thus, be united. Yes, in course of time, they would all feel disposed to speak of all true believers as "churches of Christ," when they would find them bound in church relations.

To speak as the oracles of God in regard to names of the church, and of individual believers in Christ, would prevent the use of any other names either for such churches or individuals. Those who would bind themselves to use only the names that are found in the oracles of God would not adopt other names. Nor would they try to excuse those who venture to adopt them as religious names. The entire business of using other names as religious titles would be impossible if all would "speak as the oracles of God." This would be a very important advance in the direction of the Savior's prayer, that all believers in him might be one, as he and the Father are one.

Now let us try the divine "measuring reed" in regard to doctrine. In so doing let us suppose that we

could call before us all the reformers of the Protestant world. And suppose we would request the greatest of them to inform us of Peter's answer to the heart-pierced Jews on the day of Pentecost mentioned in the second chapter of Acts of apostles. Suppose also that we would request that reformer to speak as the oracles of God, and he would kindly consent to do so. Certainly he would, by using the Common Version of the Sacred Text, say, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Then suppose we would call on the next reformer to declare to us Peter's answer to the heart-pierced Jews who wished to know of him what they should do. By speaking as the oracles of God he would be compelled to say, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." To this we may add that if should next call on the next reformer to set forth that which Peter said to the heart-pierced Jews on the day of Pentecost, mentioned in Acts second chapter, he would be compelled to give the same answer. Certainly he would do this if he would speak as the oracles of God. Therefore he would say, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In view of all this, we can easily understand that all other reformers would be compelled to give the same answer that has been justly quoted from Acts 2: 38. Some of them might say "unto the remission of sins," or "into the remission of sins," instead of "for the remission of sins." But the answer would be the same in every essential. As a result of giving the same an-

swer they would soon have the same thoughts. Then those to whom that answer would be given would soon be united in the obedience they would show. *Oneness would be the result.* All division in directing alien sinners to become Christians would be banished. To speak the same things, or give the same answer to all heart-pierced believers, and continue to do so, without becoming united in thought, would be impossible.

That which would be true in regard to directing alien sinners would be true in regard to directing saints. Take, for instance, the work of the saints in advancing the gospel. If all reformers, and all other preachers, with all other classes of believers in Christ, would bind themselves to speak as the oracles of God, they would all be compelled to say the same in regard to missionary work. With Ephesians 3: 10, 11, 21 before them they would say, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Then, with 1st Thessalonians 1: 8 before them, they would all be compelled to say, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad."

With such, and such like, scriptures before them all the believers in all Christendom would be compelled to say the same in regard to missionary work. As a result all would contend for the church as God's missionary society, and would not be disposed to contend for, organize, nor arrange, any other kind of a society to do missionary work. Thus by speaking as the oracles of

God all believers in Christ could be united in regard to missionary work of all kinds, shades, and grades.

Now we are prepared to consider the question of instrumental music. With Romans 10: 4 before them, certainly all believers in Christ would be compelled to say, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." They could not ignore this if they would bind themselves to speak as the oracles of God. Besides, with John 10: 34 before them, they would be compelled to regard the book of Psalms as classed with the law given through Moses. The Savior there made a quotation from Psalm 82: 6, and spoke of it as in "your law," meaning the Jewish law. With all this before their minds we may safely say that all believers in Christ would be compelled to regard Romans 10: 4 as against all efforts to quote the last Psalm on instrumental music in the worship of God through Christ. To speak as the oracles of God means to use the Old Testament in the light of the New, as well as to use the exact words of the Sacred Text of the New Testament. The Jews, from a certain date in David's reign, used instrumental music in their public worship. God suffered them to have such music just as he suffered them to have a king. In each instance he suffered it because both the music and the king were in harmony with the law he had given to them. But the Apostle Paul declares that, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." This shows that we should not quote the law, nor any part of it, as authority for a practice in the worship of God through Christ. To speak as the oracles of God will forbid that we should do so. For this reason we should confine ourselves to Ephesians 5: 19, and Colossians 3: 16, in regard to music in our worship. In those scriptures we find

this: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" and, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." As a result of confining ourselves to these scriptures, and binding ourselves to speak as the oracles of God, we would all be united in word and thought and action in regard to music in the church. Not one believer in Christ will, or can, while speaking as the oracles of God, advocate man-made instruments of music to be used in worship.

If some one ventures to say that the Greek word *psallo*, used in Ephesians 5: 19, and Colossians 3: 16, means to play on an instrument we should answer that the best translators of the Bible have not so informed us. Besides, we should say that the Greek church, which doubtless understands the Greek language, does not so inform us, for it does not use musical instruments in the worship. Therefore, we could all be united on this question by speaking as the oracles of God. But even if that church had decided, or should hereafter decide, otherwise, still the truth would remain as we have stated. An innovation adopted even by the Greek church would not change the truth.

All that has been thus far stated of names, missionary societies, and musical instruments, is true of creeds, plans to raise money, young people's societies, and all else over which religious people, professing to be believers in Christ, have been divided. If they would all bind themselves down to the divine testimony, and speak as the oracles of God, they would certainly be united in word, and thought, and deed. On

all these questions believers could maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But some one may inquire, Why, then, are believers in Christ, who profess to speak as the oracles of God on all religious questions, divided about the design of baptism? In answer we may say that to speak as the oracles of God rules out the expression, "design of baptism." That expression is not found in the oracles of God. We have the expression "for the remission of sins," in regard to baptism, and in certain later translations we find "unto the remission", or "into the remission" of sins. But the expression "design of baptism" is like the expression "getting religion." *It is wholly of human formation.* In the oracles of God we find "baptism" mentioned, but not "the design of baptism", even as we have "religion" mentioned, but not "getting religion." In view of this we may repeat, and continue to repeat, that those who bind themselves to speak as the oracles of God do not advocate "the design of baptism." That expression is ruled out, even as the expression "getting religion" is ruled out.

But some one may now be ready to inquire, "Shall we accept the immersion performed by all manner of sects, and acknowledge it as New Testament baptism?" To shorten the controversy on this subject we should say that only one question are we allowed to ask immersed believers who come from other religious bodies, and wish to be united with the New Testament church. That one question is found in Acts 19: 3, and is this: "Unto what then were ye baptized?" A better translation is, "Into what then were you baptized?" If we bind ourselves down to the oracles of God we must not go beyond this question in our examination of those who offer themselves for membership in the

New Testament Church, after having been baptized by some sectarian. If they answer that they were baptized into Christ, or unto obedience to Christ, into his body, or into remission of sins, or into the death of Christ, or because they believed that they needed to follow the example of Christ, or to fulfill the scripture in going down into the water, we should not have any "doubtful disputations" concerning them. On the contrary, we should receive them as obedient believers, and bid them Godspeed in doing the divine will. And this is exactly that which we will do if we will bind ourselves up and down, and in and under, to speak as the oracles of God on that subject. As a result, we shall be perfectly joined together on this question, and shall never have controversy over the so-called "design of baptism."

But some one may ask, "How about the divine order of worship?" In response we may safely say that the oracles of God do not make mention of "the divine order of worship" as a doctrine. That doctrine would never have been mentioned among disciples if some one had not forgotten the command, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." In Acts 2: 42 an order of obedience is set forth which mentions the question of worship, but not every act of worship is there mentioned. Therefore we should not regard that order as a ritual for the guidance of the church, nor complain of churches of Christ if they do not see fit to follow it. Especially should we not suppose that if a preacher delivers a gospel sermon he is not attending to the apostles' teaching, and by that supposition rule out preaching when the church meets for worship. Laborers are few, and churches of Christ, that do their duty even one-half in sounding out the word, are not in

danger of having too much preaching. Therefore if a gospel preacher happens to be with a church, or is assisting it in a protracted meeting, he should not be prevented from preaching on Lord's day morning. Those who prevent him from preaching then because of some supposed order of worship make a mistake. Singing, reading of the scriptures, and praying—all these pertain to the teaching of the apostles, and may be attended to under that heading. The same is true of preaching the word, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting. In view of this the only point on which any one can reasonably contend for a change in the order of worship, generally adopted by the churches of Christ, is in regard to having the contribution, or fellowship, before the breaking of bread, or the communion. This point, or change, could be easily made by any church, and in order to speak as the oracles of God concerning the order of worship in every congregation it should be made. Besides, if all churches would make this change they would avoid all controversy on this subject.

But some one else may ask, whether the controversy about "communion wine" could be settled after the same manner. Yes, it certainly could be thus settled. For if all believers in Christ had bound themselves to speak as the oracles of God they would never have used the expression "communion wine." It is not found in those oracles, but is of human origin. The Savior used the expression "fruit of the vine." See Matthew 26: 29. Therefore we must confine ourselves to that expression if we would speak as the oracles of God. If "the fruit of the vine" has become fermented the result is wine—strong wine. But it is yet the fruit of the vine. If it has been kept from fermentation, or

has been recently pressed from grapes, it is still the fruit of the vine. This being true we should not have any controversy about "communion wine." A question on that subject cannot arise except by some one ignoring the command, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

At this juncture some one may be ready to inquire, "How about the religio-secular college controversy?" In answer to this we may safely say that such controversy could not have arisen among believers in Christ if some one had not failed to speak as the oracles of God. A college to teach persons in religion and secular knowledge is not mentioned in the oracles of God, especially in the new part of those oracles. The idea of a college, three-fourths secular, to teach persons in religion, and thus to do a part of the work of the church, is as foreign to the New Testament as is the mourner's bench to make Christians. This being true the statement needs only to be made, that a controversy concerning religio secular colleges could not have arisen if some one had not overlooked the command to speak as the oracles of God, and thus introduced the college.

Here some one may ask, "How about the controversy in regard to the lawfulness of religious newspapers?" In answer we may state, such a controversy has *not yet arisen*, except in regard to papers that are somewhat devoted to secular things. True, a question concerning a pure gospel paper has been offered as a bluff by those who have tried to defend the religio-secular college, or the missionary society. But the right to publish a newspaper that is largely secular, and give to it a religious name, is denied. On this question a controversy has arisen, but it is strictly one-sided, for those who advertise worldly things—things good, bad,

and indifferent—have but one defense to offer, and that is they cannot publish their papers without such things. But the lawfulness of a religious journal free from worldly advertising has never been called in question by any one, and never will be except by some one who wishes to cast reflections upon some one else. It is as scriptural to write a gospel sermon and send it to others as it is to go and preach a gospel sermon to others. *This cannot be safely denied.* But to build a religious-secular college to do a part of the work of the church, or to connect with a gospel sermon advertisements of a lot of worldly wares, is a work that cannot be engaged in by those who speak as the oracles of God.

Now we may inquire about the controversy that has arisen among some believers concerning the right hands of fellowship. In regard to it we may safely say that extending the right hands of fellowship is a divine doctrine. It is mentioned in Galatians 2: 9, and it cannot be denounced by those who speak always as the oracles of God speak. On the subject Paul wrote thus: "And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." This means that, *on the basis of equal rank*, three apostles gave to two others the right hands of fellowship as *fellow-laborers*. In other words, Paul and Barnabas were present at Jerusalem. Paul was an apostle of Christ, and Barnabas was an apostle of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11: 22), and then of the church at Antioch. (Acts 13: 1-3). To these two apostles three others at Jerusalem gave "the right hands of fellowship" as fellow-workers. Five apostles, therefore, united, or agreed, in extending to each other

the right hands of fellowship in regard to work. This was not to make any of them members of the church, or of the body of Christ, nor to give them the privilege of congregational worship. But it was strictly in view of *work*. Therefore, whoever denounces the extending of the right hands of fellowship on the basis of *equal rank*, and for the purpose of *work*, certainly ceases to speak as the oracles of God, at least, on this question.

The church of Christ, or church of God, is the pillar and ground of the truth, and thus is the support or upholder of the truth. As such its business is to make known the truth to both Jews and Gentiles. In view of this all who denounce the extending of the right hands of fellowship among *fellow-workers* in regard to upholding, and making known the truth, certainly do not, on this question, speak as the oracles of God. If there was anything miraculous about that which the mentioned apostles did in extending the right hands to each other, then an argument might be made against it. If they had professed to bestow any special gifts, or authority, on each other, we might well refuse to adopt the act as a practice, even as we should refuse to adopt the laying on of hands in appointing men to serve as elders and deacons.

As far as the divine record informs us, *something special*, and *beyond the ordinary*, belonged to all instances of the laying on of hands in setting apart men for official work. *Therefore such laying on of hands is beyond our rights or privileges*. But this is not true of the extending of the right hands of fellowship, on the basis of equal rank, and for the purpose of being united in doing the work of the Lord. That was done in regard to *work* which was in a measure committed to the church as the pillar and ground of the truth. Therefore, we

cannot speak as the oracles of God, and yet denounce it, nor act as the oracles of God sanction, if we refuse to practice it.

As the laying on of hands has been mentioned we may here inquire about the controversy which has been introduced about the laying on of hands in the appointment of officers for the church? And we may answer that such controversy could not have been introduced if all believers had confined themselves to the oracles of God. Only those who have ventured beyond those oracles have introduced that question. If it had not been introduced certainly the controversy concerning it could not have arisen. Not an instance of laying on of hands can be found in the Bible which did not have something *beyond the ordinary* outworking of the truth connected with it. The last account we find of the laying on of hands is that recorded in 2nd Timothy 1: 6, and that is a record of Paul's words to Timothy, and which record is as follows: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." In view of this, all who try to impose the laying on of hands as a practice on the churches now certainly *do not speak as the oracles of God in so doing*. On the contrary, they differ from those oracles and are responsible for all the controversy thereby introduced. We cannot connect ourselves with the man Timothy in any extraordinary work. We are not even informed that he did any of that kind. He had in him "the gift of God," which was in him by the putting on of Paul's hands. Therefore we may ask, Who can speak as the oracles of God, and declare that he ranks with Timothy in regard to anything except the necessity of studying to learn his duty, and acting the part of a plain preacher of the gospel?

To ask this question is to answer it. We do not rank with Timothy on the question of his special gift, which he received when Paul laid hands on him. Neither do we rank with him in any special work that he did or may have done. This settles the question between the *specially gifted Timothy*, who received "the gift of God" by the laying on of Paul's hands, and *all preachers who now live*.

Here some attention should be given to the controversy which has been introduced among certain believers in Christ concerning the eldership of churches of Christ. Some have supposed that the eldership was only intended for the primitive church, while the apostles were among mankind in person, and could lay hands on the elders so as to bestow on them some spiritual gift. This is, in one sense, the other extreme from the doctrine that preachers should now lay hands on men who are chosen for the eldership and deaconship. But those who do not bind themselves to speak as the oracles of God are liable to any kind of extremes. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be. When men do not finally measure themselves, in religion, by the exact words of the Sacred Text they are like a boat at sea in cloudy weather without rudder, chart, or compass. They are liable to drift in any direction, and to be wrecked on any rock. This is as true of those who reject the eldership of the New Testament church as of any other class of errorists. If they would wish to speak as the oracles of God they would read that which Paul wrote of the qualifications for bishops, as given in 1st Timothy 3: 1-7, Titus 1: 5-9. Then they would learn that those qualifications did not intimate that any *special gift of the Spirit* was necessary for the bishop's office. This, in itself, should be sufficient to

convince them that the mentioned office would be permanent, and would not be dependent on a special gift of any kind. Then, if they would read Acts 20: 28-31, also 1st Timothy 5: 17, they would learn that the elders were to "feed the flock," watch over it, and "rule" it. From this they might learn that the eldership was intended to continue because the special work required of the elders was intended to continue or be permanent. But those who denounce the eldership do not speak as the oracles of God, on this subject. On the contrary, they will resort to peculiar methods of reasoning in order to break the force of that which those oracles set forth on this subject. All such are *theorists* rather than *scripturists*. They will try to bend, or break, the force of scripture in order to advocate or defend their theory. All who have that disposition are not disposed to use fully the divine "measuring reed," as it is found in the command, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . . that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

And what may we say about the controversy which has arisen among believers in Christ about the relation of Christians to civil governments? We may safely say that it could not have arisen if those who have become its advocates had bound themselves to speak as the oracles of God. They would have left Cornelius the centurion as a Christian, serving God as a soldier in the Roman army. (Acts tenth chapter.) They would have left Erastus the chamberlain of the city serving God as a city officer. (Romans 16: 23.) And they would have left Zenas as a lawyer serving God as a Christian. (Titus 3: 13.) But as they would not bind themselves by the limit of the oracles of God, they have denounced

the calling of a soldier, of a civil officer, and of a lawyer as unchristian. Therefore they are responsible for all the controversy resulting from their refusal to be bound by the oracles of God.

In concluding this sermon we should give attention to an evil which is best known as *straining scripture*. Certain professed believers in Christ seem disposed to use scripture to accomplish their ends. In all their advocacy of truth and opposition to error they are constantly inclined to strain scripture, or get more out of a passage of scripture than is in it, in order to accomplish their ends. By so doing they often become perverters of scripture. In their anxiousness to find scripture to serve their purpose they will sometimes misapply a passage. But even when they do not misapply it they often make a wrong impression by making an impression that is too strong.

Let us consider how this may be done. In John 20: 30, 31 we read, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Now suppose that a preacher wishes to condemn all that is found in the sectarian world, even the faith in Christ which is found in sectarians. He may begin to emphasize the importance of reading the divine testimony in order to have faith. Then he may inquire, "How many have read the record that the Apostle John gave of Christ?" Yes, he may repeat the inquiry, and ask, "How many are believers in Christ simply because their parents or teachers were, and not because they have examined that testimony for themselves?" To this he may add, "If a heathen should be asked why

he believes in his gods he might say, because his parents or teachers had so instructed him." Then this scripture strainer might ask, "How much better is our faith than that of the heathen if we have not examined the divine testimony for ourselves?" By so doing a preacher could soon bring doubt in the minds of many true believers, and cause them to wonder whether they ever believed aright.

As another instance we may consider Acts 2: 38. In that scripture the Apostle Peter commanded heart-pierced Jews, saying, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." But if a man wishes to condemn all the baptizing that is done by sectarians he might say concerning this scripture, "The Apostle Peter here declares that baptism was intended to be 'for the remission of sins'—yes, *for the remission of sins*, not *for any other purpose*, or to accomplish any other end, but simply and strictly *for the remission of sins*." How long would a man need to preach after that manner before he would be able to unsettle the minds of certain believers? Not very long. Yet after that manner certain men have preached. The best way to confuse every one of that class of preachers is to ask him whether every one who is baptized acceptably to God must understand, at the time of baptism, the promise, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Then ask him what that means, and if he understood it when he was baptized. Next ask him whether all those should be baptized again who did not understand that promise when they were baptized. Then he will show his confusion, and that he is a scripture strainer.

Next we may consider the confession, as made by

the Ethiopian of whom we read in the latter part of Acts eighth chapter. In the thirty-seventh verse of that chapter we learn that he made his confession in these words: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Thus we are informed in the Common Version of the Sacred Text, and that Version can be defended in the account that it gives of the Eunuch's confession. But suppose that some one would be extra anxious to condemn all that does not conform to the exact words of this confession, certainly he could begin to inquire, "How many confessions have been made in those words?" To this he might add, "If our confession of faith was not made in the exact words of the Ethiopian Eunuch then it is not according to scripture." By failing to state that the Eunuch was not inspired to make that confession, but made it in the mentioned form of his own accord, a preacher might soon cause certain believers to fear that their confession was not made aright. As a result dissension would be introduced. We might as well say that before we can obey the gospel aright we must ask, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" or, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Those questions were necessary, but the form of them was not inspired. Neither was the form of the Eunuch's confession inspired, and, therefore, as a form of speech it is not binding on us. Yet by emphasizing it unduly the confidence of many may be shaken, and dissension may be introduced. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be, by those who are not careful to speak as the oracles of God, and venture to strain scripture.

Now we are prepared for the conclusion of the whole matter. In view of all that has been set forth on this subject we can understand how believers in Christ *can*

be united, and how they *can be divided*. We can even understand the secret of all the oneness which exists among them, and of all the division with which they have been afflicted. In proportion as believers have been careful to speak as the oracles of God they have been *united*, and in proportion as they have not been careful thus to speak they have become *divided*.

But divisions among believers in Christ are contrary to the Savior's prayer for oneness, and they are contrary to the Apostle Paul's exhortations to unity. Not only so, but divisions among believers in Christ are in opposition to the conversion of sinners and the perfection of believers. This being true certainly all believers should be careful to avoid *every word* and *every act* which will cause, or will occasion, the least division contrary to the doctrine of Christ. We should regard it as at our eternal peril that we suffer ourselves to introduce division into the body of Christ. The wisest monarch of Israel said, "These six things doth the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination unto him." The first of those seven things that he mentions is "a proud look" and the last is the one "that soweth discord among brethren." See Proverbs 6: 16-19. Then the Apostle Paul in Romans 16: 17, 18 exhorts thus: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them: for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." In view of these scriptures we can see that the workers of division contrary to truth are not servants of Christ, and are abominable in heaven's sight. So all believers in Christ should certainly strive for unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

SERMON NO. XVIII

GOD'S SPECIAL PURPOSE IN PLACING MAN ON TRIAL

Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Hebrews 5: 8, 9.

GOD placed man on trial in the Garden of Eden. He told man what he should do, and what he should not do. Man seems to have done what he was told to do, but he did not stop there. He did that which he was told not to do, and, thereby, disobeyed God.

After man had shown his disobedience in the garden God drove him out of it, and placed him on trial on the outside. He kept man on trial till the flood. After the flood he placed him on trial again, and held him on trial through the remainder of the first religious age of the world.

When mankind had been tried under the first age then God introduced a second age. This he did by giving a special law to a special people. Under that law those people were placed on trial and held thus through the second religious age of the world.

When the second age was ended God introduced a third age of trial. In this age he gave laws that were intended to try mankind more fully, than previous laws had tried them, and to lead them to live a purer life, than

they had ever lived before. This last age still continues, and will continue till the end of time. In the meantime man will continue to be on trial.

What was God's purpose in placing man on trial, and in keeping him on trial in former ages? What is his purpose in holding man on trial throughout the Gospel Age? The words of the text, chosen for this sermon, indicate the right answer to these questions, by informing us of the reason that Christ was placed on trial while he was on earth. Paul here declares of Christ, "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." In 1st Corinthians 15: 45 we learn that it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Here we read of two Adams, and Christ is declared to be "the last Adam." And, in the words chosen as the text for this sermon, we are informed that "the last Adam" was placed on trial in order that he might learn "obedience," and to prepare him for the position he now occupies in the heavens. This is more fully set forth in Hebrews 2: 10. "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Then in Hebrews 2: 17, 18 we find this: "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

These several scriptures, that have been introduced on this subject, clearly show that Christ, "the last

Adam" was subjected to trial on earth in order to accomplish a two-fold purpose. The first purpose is that he might learn "obedience by the things which he suffered," and, second, that he might be prepared by his sufferings to sympathize with those who suffer in the flesh, and might know how to make reconciliation for them. In other words, Christ was perfected in his experience as a man by the things which he suffered, and this was necessary, in order that he might become the high priest for his people. The need of this is indicated in Hebrews 5: 1, 2, where we read thus: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmities." Thus Paul wrote of the Jewish high priests, and then wrote after this manner concerning Christ: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Then comes the text,—"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

With all this before us we are prepared to conclude that, as "the last Adam" was put on trial in order that he might learn obedience, and be thereby prepared for a high and glorious position in the heavens, so "the first man Adam" was put on trial that he might learn obedience and be prepared for a high and glorious position in the heavens.

This conclusion is in perfect harmony with the divine record of God's dealings with angels, also with

men, in all ages, when preparing them for high positions on earth. It is in harmony, likewise, with the treatment which the wisest parents have given to their children, and which the wisest business men have given to their employes, and which the wisest governments have given to their soldiers.

The officer who has come up through the ranks, and has endured the hardships of a common soldier's life, knows best how to sympathize with the common soldier in all that he is required to endure. He can feel for those who are required to make a long march, and a forced march. He knows what it means to carry a soldier's equipments all day, and sleep on the ground at night. He understands the agony of being tired, and hungry, and thirsty. The commander who has passed through all this knows how to feel for the common soldier. A certain general who understood this said of his son's proposal to enter his army, "Let him go into the ranks, and carry a gun for a while." He knew that his son would not be fitted for a high position till he had endured the hardships of the lowest position.

On the same principle the wisest business man does not give his son a position in his office until he has first served in many, if not all, of the lower scales of work in his business enterprise. He knows better than to exalt his son until he has first been humbled, and has learned the humbler parts of the work. He is aware that there is a three-fold advantage in beginning at the bottom. The first advantage is that he learns obedience, the second is that he learns the business, and the third is that he learns how to treat those who will afterwards be under him.

Wise parents who are not engaged in any special business in which they wish to train their children,

will put them on trial in school, and at some kind of work, in order to develop them. They will urge their children to be faithful, and not to flinch when the severe trial comes. Wise parents know that the only way to develop manhood and womanhood, whether physical, or mental, or moral, is by trial. By long and severe trial strength is developed, patience is cultivated, self-control is acquired. The Prophet Jeremiah referred to this when he wrote thus: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth: he sitteth alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him." See Lamentations 3: 27, 28.

Now let us consider God's dealings with certain men to whom he gave high positions in this life. We shall begin with Abraham. God intended to make of him a great man, and to make of him a father of a nation. His purpose was to make him the father of two Israels—one according to the flesh and the other according to the Spirit. In so doing he proposed to make him "the father of all them that believe." (Romans 4: 11.) With this end in view God called Abraham out from his own country and kindred, and commanded him to go into a strange land. See Genesis 12: 1, Hebrews 11: 8. In that strange land God gave to him one command and promise after another by which he tried him. Finally, he commanded him to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham went as far toward offering his son to God as divine mercy would permit. When Abraham had borne that test, and had shown that he believed God to the utmost, then he had made his record of faith so that he was worthy to become "the father of all them that believe." As his record is set forth, in the Old and New Testaments, Abraham was the greatest mere man that ever lived. He became the father of the Jew-

ish people, through whom the Bible has been largely made, and by whom it has been offered to mankind. Besides he became the father of all believers in God, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. The same is still true, and will be till the end of time. But before God exalted him to such fatherhood he put him on trial, and tested him to the utmost. From this we learn that God's purpose in putting him on trial was to test his faith, and, thereby, prepare him for the exalted position which he should occupy throughout all time. The honors of Abraham extend beyond this world, for those who enter paradise are spoken of as being carried into "Abraham's bosom," where they are "comforted." See Luke 16: 22, 25. But all these honors have been bestowed upon him because he endured the trials to which God subjected him.

The story of Joseph is next in order. God chose him to be the most exalted of his father's family. But before his exaltation he ordained, and suffered, him to be severely tried. While he was in the days of his youth he was persecuted by his brethren who envied him. By them he was sold into the hands of strangers, and then sold again. He was falsely accused and then thrust into prison where he remained many years. David wrote of him thus: "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word [God's word] came: the word of the Lord tried him: the king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free: he made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at pleasure; and to teach his senators wisdom." Joseph became the second ruler in Egypt, but not until he had been severely and terribly tried through a long series of years. But such was God's plan.

The next instance which we should consider is found in Moses. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Hebrews 11: 24, 25.) As a result of his faith he turned from the royal family of Egypt, into which he had been adopted, and united himself with his own people, the Israelites, who were then in bondage. But when he tried to befriend his own people he was rejected by one of them. Then he went into a strange land where he spent forty years away from his people. At the end of that period God appeared to him in a burning bush, by his angel, and spoke to him, and declared that he would send him back to Egypt, to lead forth the Israelites out of bondage. See Exodus second and third chapters. This was all accomplished, as we may learn by reading Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Besides, God used Moses to write the first five books of the Bible, in which we find a history, covering a period of over twenty-five hundred years. In that history is recorded the most clear, and most reasonable, account of the origin of the material world, of the origin of mankind, and of the origin of the most ancient nations. Moreover, God made Moses a prophet, to write the future history of the Israelites in prophecy, and to write concerning Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. See Deuteronomy eighteenth and twenty-eighth chapters. But the man whom God used to accomplish these important ends was persecuted in his infancy, tried in his youth, severely tried in his mature life, and oppressed with trial in his old age. Finally, we learn that God held him to a strict account for his conduct, and did not permit him to enter the land of promise because

of one sin that he committed. See Numbers 20: 12.

The history of David should be next considered. While he was a shepherd lad he was called from following sheep, and was anointed to be king over Israel. But a king named Saul was then reigning, and when he learned that David had been anointed to succeed him on the throne of Israel he determined to slay him. In every way that his malice suggested he tried to end David's life. He hunted him as he would have hunted a wild beast in the mountains. In 1st Samuel 24: 2 we read, "Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats." By so doing he made David's life as miserable as he possibly could, and David had many narrow escapes from him. But God took care of David, and taught him what danger was, likewise what was meant by God's care over him. As a result, when Saul was dead, and David became king over Israel, he was exalted to be the ruler of God's people, also to write the Book of Psalms, which is above all other books of sacred song. Moreover, David was chosen to be a prophet of God, and an earthly ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he saw in prophetic vision, and wrote of him as his "Lord." But the years of trial that passed between the time that David was anointed to be king, and the time that he became king, prepared him to write the Book of Psalms, and to remain humble during his reign as king. This was all according to God's plan in dealing with mankind. "Before honor is humility." (Proverbs 15: 33.) Moreover, in order for mankind to remain humble throughout life they need, in many instances, to be kept on trial throughout life. Certainly those who have been most highly exalted, and have made the best record in exalted positions,

have been subjected to many trials during their lives.

Attention is now invited to the record given in the Book of Daniel. The Prophet Daniel and his three friends were captive Jews in the land of Babylon. They were first tested, or put on trial, in regard to food and drink. They bore the test well. God was with them, and they were highly exalted. At a later date they were more severely tried. They were envied and hated because of their prominence. In course of time the King of Babylon made an image of gold, and required that all his princes, and other prominent men, should bow down to it. Daniel seems to have been an exception, as he "sat in the gate of the king." But his three friends were required to bow down to that image. When they refused they were commanded to be cast into a fiery furnace, heated hotter than usual. They endured the trial, and God took care of them. As a result, they were "promoted . . . in the province of Babylon," and they have been exalted, in the divine record, as among the ancient worthies. See Daniel third chapter.

But Daniel was not suffered to escape the severest of trials. At a later date in his history he was envied and hated because of his prominence, and his life was plotted against by his enemies. As a result he was required to pass through a den of lions. But God took care of him, and afterwards he was more highly esteemed than ever before and "prospered." See Daniel sixth chapter. And all this was in harmony with God's plan of placing men on trial before exalting them, and of suffering them to be tried in the days of their exaltation. Those who have made the best record have been the most severely tried in all ages of the world's history.

When we come to the New Testament we find the same doctrine illustrated. The man Jesus Christ was chief in enduring trials. He humbled himself more than any other man ever did because he was "in the bosom of the Father" before he came to earth (John 1: 18), and had "glory" with the Father "before the world was." (John 17: 5.) "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2: 6-11.) In Hebrews 12: 2 we read this of Christ: "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Christ is the perfect exemplar in enduring trial, and Paul is the perfect imitator. In order to be man's Savior Christ laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was brought into existence. In order to become a follower of Christ Saul of Tarsus had to lay aside all the glory that he had among the Jews. See Philippians 3: 4-9. Though he was the chief of sinners before Christ appeared to him, yet he afterwards wrote thus of himself: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life."

(1st Timothy 1: 16.) And he was kept on trial throughout his life. In 2nd Corinthians 11: 24-28 he summed up his trials after this manner: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Paul's life of trial was ended in a martyr's death. He was a perfect imitator of Christ, and his life of trial illustrates what may be endured for Christ's sake. But that which we need specially to consider is, that Christ chose Paul to be "a pattern to them" who would afterwards believe on him "to life everlasting," likewise that Paul was chosen to write fourteen of the letters that were addressed to Christians. As a result, Paul has been the most highly exalted man who has lived since Christ was on earth. But from the time that he was called to be an apostle, onward to the end of his life, he was on trial. During most of his life, as an apostle, he was under persecution. But as the Lord's purpose was to make him an example of suffering, "for a pattern to them" who would afterwards "believe on him to life everlasting," we can understand the divine purpose in subjecting him to such constant trial.

God desires tried spirits to be with him forever. The

history that he has given to mankind shows that he does not desire any except TRIED SPIRITS. Even angels were subjected to trial. A spirit being that God created, who is spoken of as a "dragon," lifted himself up with pride, and caused "war in heaven." He won angels over to his side. But some of them he could not win. He and those he had won became the enemies of those who opposed him. As a result war was introduced in heaven. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Revelation 12:7-9.)

This record indicates that God so arranged conditions in heaven that his angels were subjected to trial. He did not intend to trust his free intelligences to do his bidding till they had been fully tested. In order to test them he created a being in heaven who could and did lift himself up with pride. An intimation on this subject is found in 1st Timothy 3:6. An elder or bishop should not be chosen from among young converts lest he be lifted up with pride, and thereby "fall into the condemnation of the devil." This implies that the being who is now called "the devil" became such by lifting himself up with pride. God needed such a being to test angels in heaven, and then to test mankind on earth. Only those responsible beings who have endured, and will endure, the test well will be fit to praise God forever in heaven. Only such are fit for high positions on earth, and only such will be fit to enter heaven. Infants and idiots are not responsible, and the Lord has another plan for them. They will be saved by

reason of Christ's death for them without trial on their part. But those who have come to responsible life have been, and are, and will be, tested. *God desires tried spirits to dwell with him forever.* In order to have such spirits he knew it would be necessary to put them on trial.

Now we understand God's purpose in placing mankind on trial. As we understand that purpose we are prepared to endure the trials to which we are subjected. His own Son was placed on trial to prepare him for the position he now occupies in the heavens. He has placed mankind on trial to prepare them for the position he intends that they shall occupy in heaven.

Now we are prepared to understand the following, which God caused Moses to write to ancient Israel: "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (Deuteronomy 8: 1-5).

To modern Israel, or Israel according to the Spirit,

Paul was instructed to write thus: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they, verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12: 6-11).

God's purpose in chastening the people of ancient Israel—Israel according to the flesh—was in order to test their loyalty to him, and to accomplish an earthly end. That end is expressed in these words: "And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And thou shalt be the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath." (Deuteronomy 28: 12, 13). God's purpose in chastening Israel according to the Spirit is to test loyalty to him, and to make the tested ones "partakers of his holiness."

In view of all this we can understand the following: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing." (James 1: 2-4). In order that we may be partakers of the divine holiness we need patience and

only by the "trying" of our faith in divers temptations can we develop patience. That which is here called patience is not quietness and smoothness when we are not tried, but it is self-control when in the midst of trial, and willingness to wait until the Lord will adjust the wrongs that we suffer, or open the way for our defense against them. "Divers temptations" furnish the opportunity to develop such patience, and for that reason we should rejoice when such "temptations" come upon us. Paul had this in view when he wrote thus: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience." (Romans 5: 3.)

This same idea a certain uninspired poet had in mind when he wrote these lines:

"Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way;
Might I not with reason fear,
I should prove a castaway?

Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low and keep me there."

But some one may say, "I can see why we should be chastised for our faults, but I can't see why we should be chastised when we are doing the best of which we are capable." Let us consider that which Paul wrote of himself in 2nd Corinthians 12: 7-10. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he said, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most

gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

According to this record, of a special trial to which Paul was subjected, the Lord did not wait till Paul had done wrong before he chastised him. But the Lord foresaw his danger, and gave to him an affliction which he, figuratively, called "a thorn in the flesh," and then explained by saying "the messenger of Satan to buffet me." The word "buffet" means to strike with the fist, and thus intimates that the Lord suffered Paul to be opposed and annoyed by some person who did him harm, and, perhaps, did him some physical injury, or slandered him, so as to annoy him. But, whatever may have been the special affliction which Paul suffered, at the time now referred to, yet it was brought upon him by the Lord's arrangement. And the Lord did this to prevent Paul from doing wrong, and not because he had done wrong. This indicates the Lord's care for him, and shows that the Lord is justified in afflicting his people, or suffering them to be afflicted, in order to occupy their thoughts so as to prevent them from doing wrong.

Now we are prepared to understand the reason for the poverty, sicknesses, and other misfortunes, that God suffers to come upon his faithful followers. They are not, perhaps, a chastisement for wrongs already committed, but, in many instances, they may be suffered to come upon them in order to *prevent them from doing wrong*. Evil can come upon us only as God suffers it to come. We need not say that he inflicts special judgments upon us, nor, even, that he PERMITS any

one to do us harm. The word "permits" implies THE RIGHT to do anything that is permitted. But the word "suffers" simply means "does not prevent." This use of the word is found in Acts 14: 16, and many other places, and should be considered by all who would speak accurately, and think clearly on this subject. Much evil exists in the world, and we may pray to be delivered from evil. Yet we should say, as Christ did in the Garden of Gethsemane,—“Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke 22: 42.)

The Lord knows what is best for us. He knows what we can endure much better than earthly parents know what their children can endure. A story is told of a mother who whipped her son before she sent him to the village well after a pitcher of water. She whipped him in order to put him on his guard, and, thus, prevent him from breaking the pitcher by his carelessness. We may smile at that woman's precaution. But suppose that she had but that one pitcher, and that she could not get another. She knew that if it would be much broken she could not mend it, and, therefore, felt that it *must not be broken*. The Lord knows that our souls *should not be stained with sin*. He knows, likewise, that though he is able to blot out stains that sin may make on our souls, yet if we go into sin we may not return to him again so as to permit him to blot them out. In view of this we should trust God with unwavering faith AT ALL TIMES. He knows what is best, and the chief desires of our hearts concerning ourselves should be expressed in this song:

“Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe;
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earthly woe.

A faith that shines more bright and clear,
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear
In darkness feels no doubt.

That will not murmur nor complain,
Beneath the chastening rod;
But in the hour of grief and pain,
Will lean upon its God."

God desires tried spirits, and, therefore, his purpose in placing mankind on trial has been to develop faith, patience, and humility, in them, and, thereby, purge them from all the dross of their being so that they might be as purified metal before him. The Holy Spirit referred to this when he caused an apostle to write to Christians, saying, "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1st Peter 1: 6, 7.) Here we are informed of the preciousness of our faith in God's sight, and that it will be unto the divine honor and glory when Christ will come again.

This same apostle wrote thus: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no 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 judgeth righteously: who, his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to

sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1st Peter 2:18-24.)

In these scriptures we learn that we should be humble and patient in all our trials, even when we suffer unjustly, remembering that Christ suffered for us, though he was without sin. We should remember, likewise, the patience with which He endured his sufferings, and that by his stripes we are healed. In other words, as He suffered patiently to accomplish an important end so we should suffer patiently to accomplish the end that God has in view in subjecting us to trial. But when we speak of Christ's patience, let us not deceive ourselves. His patience did not require that he should not at any time reply, and even reply sharply, to unjust charges. But when the time came for Him to die in order to comply with his Father's will he endured patiently the unjust treatment that his enemies inflicted on him.

This brings our thoughts to Hebrews 12: 1-3. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [those witnesses mentioned in the previous chapter] let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

In these scriptures we find an exhortation to be patient, and to consider that which Christ endured for the joy that was set before him. That is to say, as He endured patiently all that he was divinely required to

suffer, so we should endure patiently all that we are divinely required to suffer. As He patiently endured it all for the joy that was set before him so we should endure it all patiently for the joy that is set before us. How blessed is the Savior's example, followed by that of the Apostle Paul, who was made a "pattern" to believers! In the midst of all trials, even the severest, we are assured that Christ knows what we suffer, and can sympathize with us. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," for he was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Then, in the midst of all trials, we have this assurance: "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." (1st Corinthians 10: 13.)

Here is a gracious assurance. The Lord knows that temptations are necessary for us, in order to humble us, and keep us from the evil that is in the world. Yet He will not suffer us to be overwhelmed but will with the temptation make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it. Jeremiah wrote thus in regard to God's dealings with the Jews. He said, "For the Lord will not cast off forever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth." (Lamentations 3: 31-34.) In their distress the Jews lost faith, but God assured them that he had not forgotten them. In Isaiah 49: 14-16 we read, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have com-

passion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." As God thus remembered his ancient people, surely he will not forget us. No. He says to us, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Hebrews 13: 5, 6.) In view of such assurances we may in all our trials, in sickness, and even in death, inquire and declare in the words of Paul in the last of the eighth chapter of Romans. "If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Because of such assurances we should delight to believe in God and Christ. We should delight to bear the trial of turning from all our sins. We should delight to confess our faith in Christ before mankind.

We should delight to honor God and Christ by being buried in baptism. If we have already been buried in water baptism we should delight to walk in the "newness of life" to which we have been raised. We should delight to wear the name of Christ, to meet for worship every first day of the week, and to give into the Lord's treasury as we have been prospered. We should delight to read and study the Bible, and delight to pray. We should delight to hold close communion with God and Christ by meditating on the divine word, by secret prayer and praise, and thanksgiving and adoration. We should delight in the communion of saints, and in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Therefore we should delight in bearing with one another in love, and remember that whatever we do to any one of Christ's disciples he regards as done unto himself, whether it be good or bad. Then we should delight to talk to others about the welfare of their souls. All this, and more, we should delight to do because God requires it in course of our life on earth, which is a period of trial, and is intended to prepare us for everlasting joys at his right hand.

SERMON NO. XIX

GOD'S SPECIAL PURPOSE IN CREATING MAN

We love Him because He first loved us. 1st John 4: 19.

PARENTS love their children and children love their parents. Such love is a part of nature in both parents and children. As it is a part of nature it is not the result of reason, nor of grateful feelings. This is the first love of mankind, and is a part of their animal nature. It is found in the lower orders of the animal kingdom, and this shows that it is natural, and not the outworking of reason, nor of gratitude.

But as children become older they begin to show themselves more than while they were infants. When they show more goodness than badness all good parents will love them with grateful feelings. They will be grateful to the Author of nature because he has permitted them to be blessed with good children. This may be called a second love in parents for their children, and is the outgrowth of reason and gratitude.

Children who are most highly gifted with reason and gratitude will soon know enough to love their parents because of kindness received from them. Such children will know enough to understand that their parents, teachers, and other guardians, know more than they do. As a result they will obey them, because they regard them as wiser than themselves, and

will, in most instances, keep out of trouble. But children who are not very highly gifted by nature in the domain of reason and gratitude will often wish to have their own way. They will sometimes cherish the thought that they know better than their parents, and other guardians, what they may do. As a result they will, sometimes, venture to do that which they have been told to avoid. As a further result they will get themselves into trouble. Then their parents will go after them, and try to help them out of trouble. When they succeed in getting them out, then the children, if they have the most ordinary reason and gratitude, will love their parents because their parents have first loved them. Those children will then say to their parents, something like this: We see that you are our best friends, and that if we had obeyed you we would not have brought ourselves into trouble, also that when we did get into trouble, by disobeying you, then you helped us out. We now love you because you first loved us.

When children are brought to the condition of mind and heart just mentioned they have something more than natural love for their parents. They have a kind of second love for them, which is the result of reason and gratitude operating in their minds and hearts toward their parents. This love is the kind that is referred to in the words of the text, and is the kind that God desires that we shall have for him. The Apostle John declares, "We love Him because he first loved us." To have millions of beings, in his own image, who would love him because he first loved them was one of the ends which God had in view when he created mankind. This is a fair conclusion from the words of the text used as a foundation for this sermon.

But a "fair conclusion" is not all that we may have

on this subject. In Psalm 103: 13 we find this: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Then in Matthew 7: 11 we find this also: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" In the scriptures just quoted we have evidence, from both the Old Testament and the New, that the love of earthly parents for their children may be justly referred to in order to illustrate God's love for his people. In view of this we may regard the desire of earthly parents for beings in their own image, who will love them because they first loved those beings, as an illustration of God's desire in the same direction. This desire in men and women explains, in some measure, the marriage relation when entered into with the highest and purest motives. It explains likewise the fact that God created man in his own image, and made him chief of earthly beings, also the fact that he has watched over him in his good providence, and has arranged a plan by which to save him from sin. *He desired beings in his own image who would love him because he first loved them.* When those beings consider that which God has done for them, and are, thereby, led to love him because he first loved them, then is fulfilled one of God's purposes in creating mankind, and in being good to them in all ages of their existence on earth. *He desired to win their hearts by his goodness.* In view of this Paul said, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Romans 2: 4.) When this saying is fulfilled in us, then the words of our text are fulfilled in us, and, *we love God because he first loved us.*

The Bible reveals three reasons which should cause mankind to love God. All who will consider those rea-

sons aright will feel overwhelmed, and will love God with their whole heart. The first of those reasons is found in that which God has done for man in creation. He formed man in his own "image," after his own "likeness," and gave him rulership "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1: 26.) If we could not find any reason, besides this which has just been expressed, for man to love God supremely, certainly this reason should be sufficient. Let us consider what it means.

1. It means that when God created man in his own image he formed him from the dust of the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (Genesis 2: 7.) This means that man is made up of a body that was taken from the earth, and of breath that came from God, who is "the Father of spirits." (Hebrews 12: 9.) Then in Zechariah 12: 1 we learn that God "formeth the spirit of man within him." In Ecclesiastes 3: 21 we learn that man's spirit is so different from the spirit of the beast that when at death man's spirit "goeth upward," the spirit of the beast "goeth downward to the earth." Next, in Ecclesiastes 12: 7, we learn that when man shall die, "then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Finally, in 2nd Corinthians 4: 16, we learn that man is made up of two men,—an "outward man" and an "inward man." We learn also that these two men are so different that while the OUTWARD man, or body, perishes, the INWARD man, or spirit, is renewed day by day.

By reason of what has just been stated concerning man we can understand that he is far above all the low-

er orders of creation, and is very DIFFERENT FROM them, as well as OVER them. He is not only GREATER than the lower orders of creation, but he is of a HIGHER ORDER of beings than they are. God put them under him, and they were intended to serve him. The horse-kind, the cattle-kind, the sheep-kind, the fowl-kind, the fish-kind, and all other kinds of beings on earth were intended to serve man. He was intended to rule over them, and to have dominion over the entire earth, and subdue it. (Genesis 1: 26.) In view of all this man should certainly love God with all his heart.

But this is not all. Because man bears God's image his life is very precious in God's sight. In Genesis 9: 6 we read this: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." In this scripture is revealed the sacredness of man's person in the sight of God. Whoever, through personal vengeance, makes a deadly assault on man's body, so offends God that he has condemned that one to death. The foundation of capital punishment is, therefore, found in the sacredness of man's body. He is made in the image of God, and because he bears God's likeness whoever kills him through vengeance must be killed. Sufficient is said in scripture about God's hands, and eyes, and nostrils, and mouth, to imply that he has a form. Besides, in Hebrews 1: 3, we learn that Christ is "the express image" of the Father's "person." This being true we are forced to conclude that God, the Father of all, is not a shapeless being, but has a form, and that man bears his form. Because man bears his form, or likeness, he is very dear to God, and whoever makes a deadly assault on that form, by reason of personal vengeance, so offends God that the divine sentence is that he shall be killed. This implies

that even to cut off a man's finger, through vengeance or spite, is an offense against God because it mars the perfection of the image which God has given to man.

Because of the sacredness of man's body it should be carefully protected from every evil, especially evil habits. Man endangers his soul when he corrupts his body by a bad habit of any kind. God suffers him to corrupt his body, at his peril, but does not give him any right to corrupt it, nor to degrade it, in any manner. On the contrary, man should regard his body as too high, too dignified, too excellent, to be, in any respect, wilfully damaged. It bears the divine image, and is the dwelling place of the soul, or spirit, while man is on trial in this life. This being true, man should regard himself as too exalted in origin, and relation, to be guilty of anything low, or mean, or vile, or degrading. By reason of all this man should feel grateful to God every day of his life, and should love God supremely because of all that God has done for him in creation. If God's goodness toward man in creation could be regarded as all that God has done for him, yet this should be sufficient to stir his reason and gratitude to the utmost, and cause him to say, It is enough; God has been so good to me that I will love him, and serve him, with my whole heart all the days of my life. When our reason and gratitude lead us thus to conclude, then are fulfilled in us the words of the text, "We love him because he first loved us."

But there is another great reason why mankind should love God supremely. That reason is found in God's providence, or care, over man, from the beginning even unto the present. When man had sinned God did not abandon him. When he became unfit for the Garden of Eden God did not let him remain there

and ruin himself forever, nor did he thrust him out and let him starve. On the contrary, he drove him forth from the Garden, yet gave him a chance for life by tilling the ground outside of the Garden. Though God doomed him to a life of toil, yet he did so because he knew it would be best for him. The divine sentence was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

In course of time nearly all of mankind became very wicked, so that they deserved to die. But God knew who among them were righteous, and he would not punish the righteous with the wicked. In the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Genesis we are informed concerning the flood, by which all the wicked of the earth were drowned. In those chapters we are informed also of the ark in which a righteous man named Noah, and his family, were saved. All this shows God's providence, or care, for mankind. He suffered the wicked to live till they were not fit to live any longer, and then he took care of the righteous. The same was true in regard to the city of Sodom of which we read in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Genesis. When nearly all the people of that city had become so corrupt that they were not fit to live God decided that they should die. But he would not kill the righteous with the wicked. In that city lived a righteous man named Lot, and God sent two angels to take him and his family out of it before he overthrew it. This shows God's good providence, or care, for his people.

After the flood was over God gave to mankind a promise that he would not bring another flood over the entire earth. That promise he set forth thus: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold

and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8: 22.) Since that promise was made over four thousand years have passed, and it has never failed entirely in any country. The wicked, as well as the righteous, have been benefited by it, and have rejoiced in its advantages. By reason of the constancy of that promise the farmer plows and plants and sows with hope of a harvest, and the merchant buys his spring and summer, his fall and winter, goods, with hope that they will be needed by the people who patronize his business. On the same promise, as a basis, or foundation, for plans, all other kinds of business are arranged and carried on. This is true in heathen lands as well as in Bible lands. Even among the heathen God has not left himself without witness of his goodness, in that he has given them rain and fruitful seasons, filling them with food and gladness. A local dearth, by reason of a dry season, or a local flood by reason of a heavy rainfall, has occurred. But the divine promise to Noah, in regard to the seasons of the year, has been fulfilled to all nations for over four thousand years. This shows God's goodness toward mankind, and by his goodness he endeavors to lead them to repentance.

In his Sermon on the Mount the Savior says of his Father, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust." See Matthew 5: 45. In view of this, and of all that may be seen of God's goodness, we may safely say that an infidel's soil is as well warmed by the sun, and watered by the clouds, as is the soil of the Christian. An infidel and a Christian may have fields that join each other. The cloud that waters one of them, as a rule, waters the other. The same sunshine and south wind warms them both. If the infidel is as good a farmer

as the Christian is, then he will raise as good a crop as the Christian does, if his land is as good as that of the Christian. If his land is better than the Christian's, then he may raise a better crop than the Christian. If he lives a moral life he may have as good health as the Christian, and if he has by nature a better constitution than the Christian his health may be better than that of the Christian. For, by his goodness the Lord endeavors to lead mankind to repentance, and to cause them to love him because he first loved them.

Wicked persons do not understand this question because they do not study the Bible. They seem to think that God certainly cannot regard them as great sinners because, in many instances, they are prospered more than the righteous are—in the things of this world. Some of them have been heard to speak after this manner: "If I am as bad a man as preachers say I am, then why doesn't the Lord kill me, instead of allowing me to live and flourish?" Infidels sometimes refer to the fact that they live and flourish, and use that fact as an argument against the doctrine that there is a God who knows the hearts of all mankind. Even professed Christians, who are in error, sometimes reason after the same manner. "If our practices are as wrong as some say they are, why does not God strike us all dead?" Thus spoke a religious man in defense of his errors.

All who reason thus forget that in former ages God did kill many persons for their wrong doctrines and wrong practices. A record of his severe judgments against wrong-doers of former ages has been made and preserved for us to consider. That he condemns sin is clearly shown by such judgments. They show that God always meant what he said, and said what he meant.

God's record of those judgments was written for our learning, and for our warning, that we should not desire evil things. See Romans 15: 4; 1st Corinthians 10: 5-12. God intends that we shall consider the record that he has made of his judgments, and be warned by it, also that we shall consider that, in the Gospel Age, he endeavors, by his goodness, to lead mankind to repentance, and thereby cause them to love him because he first loved them.

God does not desire mankind to obey him because they fear he will cut their crops short, nor because they are afraid that he will send upon them some serious sickness, an earthquake, a hail storm, a cyclone, thunder-bolts, lightning-shafts, nor any other evil. He does not wish them to submit to him as cowardly slaves submit to a tyrant of a master. But He desires to win their hearts by his good providence—by his loving kindness and tender mercy—by showing himself to them in goodness and love. If God would afflict all his enemies, and bless all his friends, in regard to earthly affairs, then those who would submit to him might have mingled motives. They might do so because they feared earthly evils, and desired earthly benefits. He tested the Jews on that principle, and they made a bad record. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy we find a record of the blessings which he promised the Jews, and the curses he threatened against them, in earthly affairs. But neither the promised blessings, nor the threatened curses, seemed to win their hearts. As a result they did not obey Him with constancy, but soon forgot both his promises and his threatenings. They behaved like children who think they are too big to be like little children, but have not sense enough to be men and women. They needed correction, and God

gave it to them. But he desires something better of those who live in the Gospel Age. He shows himself to them in his good providence, and by his goodness desires to win their hearts and lead them to repentance. All who will consider as they should His good providence—his kind care—in their behalf, will certainly be led to love him. Their gratitude will be so stirred, that their reason will cause them to say—"It is enough; I cannot longer be ungrateful to God; he is my best friend; I love him because he first loved me." Certainly if mankind will consider aright all that God has done for them in creation as well as in providence they will cease to feel careless about their souls, and will not rebel any longer against God. On the contrary, they will humble themselves before God, and will say, "We love Him because he first loved us."

But there is yet another reason why mankind should love God supremely. It is found in that which God has done for man in redemption. This reason is more tender and touching than those already considered. All who have considered it aright have been won over to the side of God. Man cannot think as he should think of all that God has done to save him from sin, and not be won over from the ways of sin. The Savior says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16.) The Apostle Paul says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5: 8.) Then the Apostle John says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1st John 4: 10.)

God's love for man was shown in creation, and has

been shown, in all ages of man's existence, by his good providence over man. But the fullness and perfection of his love for man is shown in redemption—in the plan that he has adopted to win man from sin, and bring him back to God. All who have thus far considered aright this plan of God have been constrained to fall out with their sins, and to love God with their whole heart. Man cannot continue to rebel against God if he will only think aright of all that God has done to save him, as the plan of salvation is revealed in the New Testament.

But many seem to think that God's plan to save mankind is all a mystery, and they complain of not being able to understand it. They object to it because they think it requires a blind faith on their part. They say that the doctrine of life through death is a mystery, especially the doctrine of providing life for a sinful world through the death of a spotless victim. They complain that such an arrangement is unfair as well as a mystery.

To all who reason after the manner just mentioned the fact should be stated *that man's earthly life is sustained through the death of innocent victims*. The bread that he eats means the death of that much grain, and the meat he eats means the death of the animal on which it grew. Then his eating of vegetables means the death of a part of the vegetable kingdom. Thus man's earth-life is sustained by death—even the death of innocent victims—through a process called digestion, and man is very willing to receive the benefits of that process. He does not become perverse and complain that he cannot understand such a process, and, then, on that account, rebel against the arrangement by which he lives. On the contrary, he is much pleased

with that arrangement, and rejoices in its pleasures and benefits. The eating and drinking and digesting of food that is necessary to sustain his life in this world man accepts without rebellion, and, even, without complaint, except when he cannot get all he desires, or when he eats and drinks more than his digestive organs will take care of without discomfort. But when the benefits of redemption are offered to man he often complains, and pretends that he does not understand the mystery of being saved through the death of an innocent victim. Yet if he will exercise his common sense, and common honesty, in considering the plan of redemption all will be well. He will understand all that he is required to do, and will feel assured that he can trust God for all else. The word "digestion" is a name for a mystery, and so is the word "atonement." But by eating and drinking aright man learns the advantage of digestion, and by obeying the gospel aright he may learn the advantage of the atonement. By the digestion, which God has arranged, man's body is supplied with the benefits of suitable material food, and by the atonement, which Christ made for mankind, the spirit of man is provided with all that is necessary for its spiritual food. By the offering which Christ made of himself the offended justice was satisfied, and the violated law taken out of the way. Christ died in order that God might be just, and yet pardon those who believe in Christ and obey him. See Romans 3: 25, 26, also Hebrews 5: 8, 9. This may be made plain by an illustration.

A story is told of an ancient king of Armenia who made a law and attached to it the penalty that whoever would break it should suffer the loss of both of his eyes. That king was horrified when he learned that his eldest

son had broken it. As a father he could not bear the thought of ordering his son's eyes put out, yet as a king he could not be partial toward his son. In his distress he called a council of his wise men. One of them suggested that if the king would suffer the loss of one of his own eyes, and the son would suffer the loss of the other, then the letter of the law would be satisfied. The story states that this was done. The father divided the penalty with his son, and suffered the loss of one of his own eyes in order that his son might not be wholly deprived of his sight. This story touches the question of the atonement which Christ made for man, but does not illustrate it with clearness. Therefore, let us suppose that a younger son of the mentioned king has broken the law referred to. Then let us suppose that the father proposed to his eldest son that he should divide the penalty with his younger brother, and that such proposal was accepted by that eldest son. This would give to us a better illustration of that which occurred when God gave to man a law, and attached death as a penalty, and, then, when man had broken it, proposed to his eldest son that he should divide the death penalty with his younger brother. That is what occurred in regard to man's redemption. A divine being called "the Word" was brought into existence by Jehovah before he created any other being, and by that "Word" he created all other beings. See John 1: 1-3, Colossians 1: 15-19, Hebrews 1: 1, 2. Afterwards Jehovah brought into existence a human being whom he called Adam, to whom he gave a law, and attached to it the death penalty. Adam broke that law, and Jehovah proposed to "the Word," the oldest created being of the divine family, that he should divide the death penalty with Adam and his race. Mankind dis-

obeyed their divine Father, and were in trouble. Instead of leaving them in trouble the divine Father proposed to help them, by sending into this world his eldest Son in human form to die for them, and thus divide the penalty with them. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16.)

God might have made man so that he could not have sinned. But that would have been to have made him a sort of machine, that could not be worthy of praise or blame. Or God could have sent an angel to be with man at all times so as to protect him from temptation. But that would have been to have saved him from all trial, and prevent him from showing his love for his Maker. As a result the special end that God had in view when he created man could not have been accomplished. *God desired beings in his own image who would love him because he first loved them.* Therefore He needed to give them time and place to listen to the tempter's voice, and even to sin, in order that he might reveal himself to them as their best friend, and show his love for them so as to win their hearts. The wisest and best of earthly parents have treated their own children thus. They have exposed them to physical, mental, and moral dangers, in order to test them, and develop them. If they have become sick, or have done wrong, their parents have shown their love for them, and thus have won their hearts. On the same principle God has dealt with mankind in order to win their hearts, and to cause them to love him because he first loved them.

When Adam and Eve had sinned they were afraid to meet their Maker. In Genesis 3: 8 we read, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the

garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." If children have been obedient in the absence of their parents, then they are glad when their parents return. But if they have been disobedient, then they are afraid to meet their parents. Thus it was with our first parents. While they were obedient they were, doubtless, pleased to hear the voice of their Maker; but when they had sinned they were afraid of that voice. This shows that sin had made cowards of them, even as it has made of their descendants in all ages of their existence. Mankind become enemies of their fellow-mortals just in proportion as they sin against them, or do them any kind of wrong. Mankind cannot love those whom they have wilfully injured. The rule is that they hate those they have injured until they are led to repent of the injury they have done to them. The same has been true of mankind toward God. When our first parents had sinned against God they were afraid of his voice, and tried to hide themselves. (Genesis 3: 8.) When certain of their descendants had sinned against God they did not like to retain him in their knowledge. (Romans 1: 28.) The Gentiles were alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works. (Colossians 1: 21.)

In the light of all that has just been stated in regard to the effect of sin on the human mind and heart, we can understand that when God proposed to save man from sin he needed to provide an offering which would satisfy offended justice and break down the enmity which sin had made in the human mind and heart. This two-fold end needed to be accomplished in order to save man. God needed to divide with man the penalty pronounced upon him because of sin, and he needed

to do this in such a manner as to touch man's heart, and break down the enmity which sin had made in him. How could this be accomplished?

A story is told of two men who went into the far west of the United States to make a home for themselves in a prairie country. One of them had a family, but the other had not. Each of them built for himself a sod house, and began to live in it. In course of time the man who had a family began to cherish the idea that the other man was his enemy, and decided to kill him. One day he tried to get a fair shot at him with his rifle, but before he could do so a blizzard drove him to his home. When he reached his home he found that his youngest child was missing. The storm was raging. He could not go out into it, except at his peril. He knew not which way to go even if he could have ventured. He spent the evening and night in agony. His wife suffered, if possible, more than he suffered. The next morning the storm had ceased, and those parents went about their affairs. But they had broken hearts, oppressed spirits, and reproachful feelings. Their little one was certainly dead, they thought, and they would never see her again. The wolves might find her body, eat her flesh, and gnaw her bones. Such were their reflections, when they saw coming toward their house the man who was supposed to be their enemy. He had a bundle in his arms, but they did not know what was in it. He hurried toward them, entered their house, and unwrapped their little darling alive and well. As he did so he said, "When that blizzard came up last evening this little creature was near my place and I took her in to keep her from freezing, and I thought I'd bring her up early, for I knew you'd be uneasy about her."

We need not to be informed that the father of that little child did not try again to kill the man who had saved his child's life and changed the agony of himself and family into joy. That one act of kindness broke down the enmity which he had cherished against his neighbor, and he afterwards regarded him as his friend. Such is the human heart. It can be touched and made tender by acts of kindness, and on this principle God has proposed to break down the enmity which sin has made in the human mind and heart.

A preacher of Christ tried to illustrate God's effort to overcome the enmity resulting from sin by the following story: A certain great and good man had an only son whom he loved very dearly. But he had an enemy also whom he tried, by many acts of kindness, to win from his enmity. All of his efforts in that direction failed, until one day two Indians came along and took that enemy with them. The father thought he would make one more effort in behalf of his enemy. So he said to his son, *My dear son, go after that enemy of mine and at the risk of your life save him.* The son started in the appointed direction and soon found the Indians and his father's enemy. They had bound him to a tree, and had commenced to torture him. The son rushed forward, and, with a hatchet that he had in his hand, cut the bands that held his father's enemy, and shouted to him to escape for his life. And so he did. But that son was caught by those Indians and tortured to death. Then that father approached his enemy and asked, "Are you not now convinced that I am your friend—your **VERY BEST** friend—since I have given my own and **ONLY** son to die that you might live?"

The preacher to whom reference has just been made did not tell that story as a fact, but simply as an

illustration, or parable, to show what God has done for mankind. Without just cause they have cherished enmity against God. By many acts of kindness He endeavored to win their hearts, and when all else failed he sent his Son—his own and only Son—to live and suffer, and then to fall into the hands of cruel men, and be put to death in man's behalf. All this He has done in order to cause us to love him because he first loved us.

Another illustration may be of advantage. A story is told of two soldiers—comrades—who were together in the war between the North and the South, when the United States of America were divided into two governments. Those comrades were captured and imprisoned. One of them became sick. When the time came to exchange prisoners only those who were well were called for. But in the instance referred to that comrade who was well looked upon his sick comrade, and thought, "If I leave you here you'll never get out of this place—I think I can stand it, and so I'll try to get you out in my place." The story states that this was done. He persuaded his sick comrade to stand up and go out in his stead. Soon that sick comrade was nursed into health, and, in due time returned to his home. But the one who took his place sickened and died in prison. He gave his life for that of his comrade.

Now, suppose that the sick comrade, of whom we have just been informed, had previously disliked the father of the one who gave his life for him. Suppose that all the family of that sick comrade had disliked the father of the man who died to save their dear one from death in an enemy's prison. Should not all their dislike for that father have been forever banished from their hearts when they learned of his son's death in behalf of their dear one?

But this is what the Son of God did for us, and he did it according to his Father's arrangement. Mankind were imprisoned by sin, and sick unto death by reason of sin. We could not deliver ourselves, nor cure ourselves. If we had been left to ourselves we would have been ruined forever. But He did not leave us

"With pitying eyes the Prince of Peace,
Beheld our helpless grief;
He saw, and oh! amazing love,
He came to our relief."

When we consider all this—all that God did for us in creation—all that he has done for us in providence—all that he has done for us in redemption—then we should all break down in our enmity, and say, "It is enough; we love God, because he first loved us." God's goodness toward us in creation and providence ought to be sufficient to win our hearts to him. But when we consider all that Christ did and suffered for us, according to God's arrangement, especially his agony on the cross in our behalf, then every one of us should say:

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died;
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from His head, his hands, his feet!
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

When this song expresses the condition of our minds and hearts, then we shall not find it a hardship to turn from evil companions, nor to quit evil habits. We shall not be ashamed to acknowledge that we are sinners and need a Savior. We shall not draw back from confessing the name of Christ before our fellow mortals, nor from being buried with him in water baptism. Neither shall we be disposed to think that some other church is as good as the Church of Christ, nor that we should divide Christ's church in order to satisfy ourselves. When we love God because he first loved us we shall delight to do his will, exactly as he has set it forth in his word. Besides, we will study the Scriptures in order to learn all that He requires of us. The entire Bible, and especially the New Testament, will then seem to us as God's love letter to us. We shall delight to read it and obey it, because it comes from Him who has honored us with his image, watched over us in his providence, and then loved us so deeply and tenderly that he has given the Son of his love to die in order to save us from our sins.

When we learn, by reading the Bible, that God requires of us to meet every first day of the week to worship him through Christ we shall not feel indifferent about his worship. Neither will we draw back from giving into the Lord's treasury according as he has prospered us. On the contrary, we shall be delighted to meet and worship Him in public, and to give as liberally into his treasury as he requires. Moreover, we shall delight to read, and pray, and give thanks, in public. We shall even learn to teach, and exhort, in public, as He requires of us. And those whom He restricts in regard to teaching, and exercising authority, will not regard it as a hardship to submit to his restrictions.

All this, with everything else that God requires of us, we will cheerfully, and humbly, and joyously do when we shall learn to love him because he first loved us.

Finally, in all the trials, and afflictions, of life we shall think of God as suffering us to be tried and afflicted for our good. "For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." (Hebrews 12: 6.) Therefore, in all our afflictions we shall still love Him because we are assured that he first loved us.

SERMON NO. XX

WHAT IS THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT?

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1st Timothy 3: 14, 15.

JESUS CHRIST is King; the New Testament is his statute book; the elders and deacons are the permanent officers in the church, and thus are servants of the church, to carry out, or execute, the will of Christ, by the aid of evangelists when they may need their aid. That Christ is King, and has a kingdom, is clearly stated in Colossians 1: 13. In that scripture Paul declares that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Then, that the New Testament is Christ's statute book, for the government of his church, is evident from 1st Timothy 3: 16, 17. Paul here declares that, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The scriptures just quoted from Paul to Timothy embrace the Old Testament as well as the New, yet the

New informs us of the use that Christians should make of the Old. To this may be added the testimony in 2nd Peter 1: 3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Here we learn that through the knowledge of Christ *all things* that pertain to life and godliness are given to Christians. This "knowledge" of Christ is, of course, offered to us in the New Covenant scriptures, and these are found in the New Testament.

The Church of Christ, or Church of God, is divinely intended to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," and thus the support of the truth, to uphold it before mankind. When that church is set in order according to the apostolic directions it is the perfection of the divine arrangement for man as a religious being. The family, as God ordained it, is perfection for man as a social being. The Church, as God ordained it, is perfection for man as a spiritual, or religious, being. A manly man, and a womanly woman, united as husband and wife, and especially when they have children in obedience to them, make a social circle that cannot be improved on. Each family thus established is perfect for man's social welfare. Then a church of Christ, with scriptural elders and deacons, with the aid of scriptural evangelists, and a membership that is in obedience to the divine will, is divine perfection, as an arrangement for man as a religious being.

In order that we may appreciate all this we should now be specially interested in the government of the church by the elders and deacons as the permanent officers or servants in the church.

At first the entire church was under the control of

the apostles. But when the temporal work of the church became too great for them, in view of their spiritual duties, then seven men were appointed to attend to that work. At a later date we learn that the church had elders. See Acts 6: 1-6; 11: 30; 15: 2. The word "ministration" is used, in Acts 6: 1, in regard to the temporal work which the seven men mentioned in that chapter were chosen to do. That word, in another form, is offered to us as the name for the deacons. Thus we learn that deacons were first appointed in the church in Jerusalem. At a later date elders were appointed. The deacons were specially chosen in view of the temporal or earthly affairs of the church. The elders had something to do with the temporal affairs, for they received the contributions from the Gentile churches. See Acts 11: 30. At the same time we learn in Acts fifteenth chapter that they were united with the apostles in spiritual affairs. Then in 1st Timothy 3: 8-13 we learn that the deacons were intended to have something to do with spiritual affairs in the church. Mention is here made of all this in order to prevent either elders or deacons from becoming technical, or sensitive, in regard to the limits of their work. Elders may attend to temporal affairs, and deacons may attend to spiritual affairs in the church. This is evident from the scriptures just referred to. Those scriptures should be considered by both elders and deacons, and by all other members of the church.

Now we are prepared to consider the qualifications of both deacons and elders. The elders are otherwise called "overseers." See Acts 20: 17, 28. Then, in Philippians 1: 1, the elders are called "bishops." The Greek word that is translated "overseer," in Acts 20: 28, is translated by the word "bishops" in Philip-

pians 1: 1. In view of all this we may use three words, namely, "elder," "overseer," and "bishop," to refer to the same servant of the church.

In the church in Jerusalem deacons were chosen before elders were mentioned. At least the record so informs us, if we may judge by its silence as well as by that which it declares. In view of this we may safely say that the church in Jerusalem was first under the control of the apostles. Next it was under control of the apostles and deacons. Finally, it was under the control of the apostles and elders and deacons. With all this before our minds we can understand how a church can now exist under the control of the apostles without either deacons or elders. One brother to lead the congregation is sufficient if only one is capable of leading it. That brother may be a bachelor, or even a young man. As a result, he is not fit for either deacon or elder. Yet he may set forth the teaching of the apostles, and so teach that the church will be under the control of the apostles. Such a church may live and do well.

But men are often in the church who are supposed to have the qualifications for the deaconship. Then an evangelist should be invited to be present—one that is free from technical reasoning and fanciful notions. He should follow the example set in Acts 6th chapter as far as consulting the congregation is concerned. Then he should discourse on the qualifications of deacons according to 1st Timothy 3: 8-13. Next he should ask the congregation if it has any man, or men, of such qualifications as Paul mentions in his directions to Timothy on that subject. By so doing the evangelist will be following the directions given in the command, "Look ye out among you," as that command is recorded

in Acts 6: 3. Thus by taking the directions in Acts 6th chapter, and 1st Timothy 3rd chapter, on this subject, an evangelist may proceed according to apostolic directions. By so doing he may be sure that he is right in his procedure.

When a brother is named for the deaconship then the apostolic question, "What saith the scripture?" (Galatians 4: 30), is in order. That question is always in order. Under the heading of that scripture, an evangelist may inquire, "Does any one know any scriptural reason why this brother, whose name has been mentioned in your hearing, should not be chosen as a deacon of this church?" If a scriptural reason is not given, then the one whose name is before the church should be declared to be a deacon of the church by the *unanimous assent* of the entire church as then and there present. This avoids all voting and showing preference by a vote.

After a church has chosen deacons it may continue under their leadership, with the apostles. This may be continued for any length of time that may be necessary, in order to do the divine will, and not go beyond that will in choosing men for the eldership who are not qualified. That is to say, a church would better remain without elders, or bishops, *always* than to choose men for that position who have not the qualifications, as mentioned by the Apostle Paul. But when a church has a man, or men, in it who may be regarded as qualified for the eldership, then the same procedure should be adopted that has been referred to as scriptural in regard to the deaconship. In the absence of all other directions in regard to choosing officers for the church we are bound up and bound down to the procedure mentioned in the 6th chapter of Acts. *That is the only*

index that we have in regard to our procedure in choosing officers. And that procedure we cannot follow entirely because an evangelist has not the authority of an apostle. Nor can any evangelist that now lives show that he ranks entirely with Timothy who had "the gift of God" which was in him by the "putting on" of Paul's hands. That connecting link between Timothy and all evangelists who now live is missing. With it the authority to lay hands on deacons, or elders, or evangelists, in appointing them to office, is absent. For that reason, if for no other, all evangelists should now refrain from such a performance. Yet in calling a congregation together, and in requesting it to choose men for official position, evangelists may now imitate the apostles. This they may do even as they may imitate them in preaching and baptizing.

Now we are prepared to consider the qualifications of deacons. They must be "grave," or sober-minded, "not double-tongued," and thus not given to saying one thing to one person and something very different, or opposite, to another. They must be "not given to much wine," and, in view of the evil that drunkenness has become, they would better keep clear of all wine, with all other drunk-making drinks. Then, they should not be "greedy of filthy lucre," or greedy to get money. Besides, they should hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," or be sound in the gospel and maintain a good conscience by doing right at all times. Next we read that these should "first be proved," or scrutinized in character and reputation. It means also that they may be, occasionally, appointed to fill the place of an absent deacon. Their wives are to be "grave" or sober-minded, not slanderers. This means that they must not be disposed to place bad construc-

tions on the conduct of others, nor take part in circulating such if shaped by others. Besides, the deacon's wife is to be "sober, faithful in all things." In addition to this a deacon is not to be regarded as the husband of more than one woman at a time. Yet he is to be a married man—one who is settled in his family relations. Finally, he is to show good rulership in his home. Paul says of deacons, "ruling their children and their own houses well." These are the qualifications for the deaconship. And when a church has a deacon of that kind it has a man, in official position, who will do it good, and not harm. If a church has two, or more, deacons of that kind it is richly blessed. Such men will seek the guidance of the apostles by consulting the scriptures. They will use "the office of a deacon well," and will "purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The qualifications for elders, overseers, or bishops, are, in some respects, the same as those required for the deaconship. Wherein they differ from those required of deacons, or are in addition to them, they shall be now considered. Bishops are required to be "vigilant," or watchful, and thus endeavor to protect the church against false teachers, and all other evil characters, with all evil practices. They should be "given to hospitality," and thus be disposed to entertain persons at their homes. This means that they should not be selfish. Then, they should be "apt to teach;" that is, able to instruct others. They should not be disposed to fight in physical combats, and thus the bishop is to be "no striker." Nor should he be "greedy of filthy lucre," or greedy for riches. But he should be "patient," and not a "brawler." This means

that he should not be a quarrelsome person. Besides, he should not be covetous, and thus desire more than a reasonable share of the things of this world. In addition to all this he should be "one that ruleth his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity." Finally, he should not be "a novice," or new convert, but a man well established in the faith.

A church that has even one elder of this kind is greatly blessed. A church that has two or more of this kind is so blessed that it should be thankful to God for them every day. Such elders are a blessing to the church at all times, and in all circumstances. They will feel the seriousness of their official work, and their responsibility. They will study the scriptures earnestly, and daily, to learn their full duty. They will watch for the souls that are under their care as those who must give account. See Hebrews 13: 17. As a result, they will not show carelessness in regard to anything that pertains to the interest of the church, but will be careful, watchful, diligent.

Such elders will not allow business affairs, nor discipline, to be neglected. At the same they will not be hasty, nor impulsive, in regard to anything. They will endeavor to co-operate with the deacons in the temporal affairs of the church. They will wish the deacons to co-operate with them in its spiritual affairs. The elders or bishops may be regarded as the presidents, and the deacons as the vice-presidents. They and the deacons will be mutual helpers as certainly as that they have the scriptural qualifications for their official positions. They will not encroach upon each other's domain of work when not necessary. Neither will they and the deacons watch the lines of their work with a jealous eye. In writing to Titus concerning bishops Paul said,

"not self-willed, not soon angry." And, if this be necessary for an elder, or bishop, it is also necessary for a deacon. The bishops and the deacons should both consider, at all times, that they *must work for the best interests of the church, and not to please themselves*. We might now proceed to consider the elders and deacons in their various duties. But certain questions arise which should receive some attention. For instance, some one may ask, Does the expression, "apt to teach," mean "apt to teach" in public? We may answer *not of necessity*. We find among men some who are excellent teachers, but they are not public speech-makers. They are *teachers of teachers*, and in private they can instruct others. Such are "apt to teach," and as the scripture does not say *in public* we should not say *in public*. A man may be the best teacher of a congregation, yet may not be able to make a public speech. Therefore, if a man knows the scriptures, and can set them forth privately, we should not refuse to accept him for the eldership because he cannot make a public speech. We cannot do so without adding the words *in public* to Paul's words "apt to teach."

A precaution should here be given in regard to leaving the final sentence in favor of the choice of elders and deacons as an open question for a week. This is best, and is in harmony with every command requiring care in all things. Sometimes a brother is mentioned for elder or deacon whose qualifications have not been, or cannot be, properly scrutinized at once. Therefore, a week's delay before the final decision is pronounced will be wise.

But some others may ask, Does a man need to have children of his own in order to show his ability to rule children? No. He may show such ability better by

ruling step-children, or grand-children, or adopted children, than by ruling his own children. The question that Paul presents here is *rulership* and not *fatherhood*. In view of this, if a man has not a child of his own, nor a child that belongs to any one else, but has a family of younger brothers and sisters, and he keeps an orderly family, he shows his rulership. He may even show such rulership by managing his business affairs aright. But if he has children, or brothers, or sisters that are of his family, and they are "accused of riot or unruly" he is certainly disqualified for the eldership. Suppose that a man has in his family children of his own, and step-children, and that his own children are obedient while his step-children are "accused of riot or unruly." Then he would certainly be disqualified if the step-children were a part of his family. But the technical reasoner on this question would say that the man's *own children* are orderly, and he should not be held responsible for the disorder in his *step-children*. That would be nonsense. But the question before Paul was *rulership*, and not *fatherhood*. This settles the question with all who are fair-minded.

That which has just been said in regard to elders is equally true in regard to deacons. The question of order, good government at home, rulership, was before Paul when he said of deacons, "ruling their children, and their own houses well." This does not mean ruling children well after the children have grown up, have married, and left home. Suppose that a deacon has children, and they all die, or all grow up, and leave home, will he need to resign because he is without children in his home? Well, suppose a deacon's wife and children all die, and, in due time, he marries another woman who is without children, must he resign

because his home is without children? To ask these questions is to answer them in the negative.

Here we should give attention, for a moment, to those who say that men cannot be found who have all the qualifications required of bishops. All who say this seem to think that every qualification referred to must be possessed by every one chosen to be an elder, or bishop, *in the highest degree*. But as the Sacred Text does not so declare we should not so declare. If a man has all the mentioned qualifications *in a moderate degree* he certainly has them. Then, as we can find men, in most of the congregations, who have such qualifications at least, *in a moderate degree*, we need not to be left without the New Testament eldership in those congregations. In some instances only one man can be found in a congregation who is fitted for the eldership. In such instances he should be chosen, and the brethren should await the development of another to help him.

But some persons are contentious about the laying on of hands in appointing men to the office of bishop, and deacon. For this reason we should here give some attention to that question. The strongest scripture used by those who contend for the laying on of hands in making such appointment is found in 1st Timothy 5: 22. Paul said, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." That command, they say, implies that Timothy did lay hands on men in appointing them to official position, and that Paul gave him the precaution not to lay hands "suddenly," or hastily, on any man. Having said this much they seem to think their case is proved, forgetting that, in 2nd Timothy 1: 6, Paul declared that Timothy had "the gift of God" in him by the putting on of Paul's hands. But let us examine the command, "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

This command, as recorded in 1st Timothy 5: 22, has occasioned much discussion, because certain persons have supposed that it was intended, by its author, to refer to the laying on of hands in ordaining men to official position in the church. But such a supposition is erroneous, as we may now proceed to show.

1. It is contrary to the connection in which the mentioned command is recorded. That connection is of the disciplinary, or corrective, kind. In the 19th verse Paul gave directions about receiving "an accusation" against an elder. In the 20th verse he gave him directions in regard to rebuking publicly those that had sinned. In the 21st verse he charged Timothy to observe those things, "without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." Then in the 23rd verse he gave him a command in regard to correcting his own physical ailments. In the 24th verse he wrote of the results of sin as they will be manifest in the judgment. In view of such a connection, those who say that the 22nd verse of this chapter refers to the setting of a church in order, by ordaining officers, certainly make a mistake. They reason like the sectarians do, who admit that John the Baptist, in Matthew 3: 10-12, used the word "fire" in a *destructive* sense, and yet contend that, in Matthew 3: 11, he used it in a *saving* sense. They reason likewise as do those sectarians who admit that, in 1st Timothy 5: 10, Paul made mention of "good works," and then specified three kinds of good works, and ended the sentence he was writing with the expression "every good work," but contend that when he used the expression, "washed the saints' feet," he referred to an *ordinance*, and not to a *good work*. That method of treating the Sacred Text is contrary to common fairness, whether adopted by a sectarian or

a disciple, only the sectarian who adopts it is more excusable than is such a disciple. (See Romans 2: 1.) Yet it is impossible to apply the command we are now considering to the laying on of hands in ordaining men to office without ignoring the connection in which that command is recorded. Even the last part of the verse of which that command is the beginning is against such an application of that command, as we are now exposing.

2. But some man has declared that the Greek word *epititheme*, here translated into English by the words "lay on," is not used in the New Testament except in a spiritual sense, and, therefore, could not refer to the exercise of church discipline. But that declaration involves a two-fold mistake. (1) It ignores certain passages of scripture. In Matthew 23: 4, Mark 4: 21, Luke 15: 5, and other places, that Greek word is used in a literal sense. (2) That declaration ignores, likewise, the fact that the divinely ordained discipline is a *spiritual procedure*.

3. But some other man has said, "The expression 'laying on of hands' is not used in the New Testament except in regard to conferring a blessing." In answer we may say that the exercise of discipline, according to scripture, is *intended to confer a blessing*. This we may learn by reading the fifth chapter of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, also by reading Galatians 6: 1 and 2nd Thessalonians 3: 14, 15. Certainly it is a blessing to a church to save it from a vile character, and is a blessing to that character to save him by placing him where he belongs, so that "he may be ashamed" and that "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Therefore 1st Timothy 5: 22 can not be justly used against the conclusion that it applies to discipline by reason of the idea that the expression

"lay hands on" is applied only to conferring a blessing.

4. But one man has written thus: "Did Paul mean to command Timothy that he should not lay hold of a man and drag him to trial? No." In response to this we might place the meanest and worst construction on the Greek word, translated by the English word "suddenly," and thus we might mistreat every other Greek word in the New Testament, but we would not compliment either our head or heart by so doing. On the contrary, we should be fair in considering every word in every part of the Bible, and fair with all other words. We should not strain any word, and thus misuse it, to support any cause. The cause of truth does not need such support, and the cause of error does not deserve support of any kind. These two causes may be, generally, known by the kind of support used in their behalf. Judging by this standard the cause of those who say that the command, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," as recorded in 1st Timothy 5: 22, refers to the laying on of hands in ordaining men to official position in the church, falls under condemnation. All their reasoning is founded on the straining of scripture. But even if they could prove that the mentioned command did refer to such ordaining, yet they could not possibly find the connecting link between themselves and the gifted Timothy, who was possessed of "the gift of God," which he received by the "putting on" of Paul's hands. (See 2nd Timothy 1: 6.) The connecting link between themselves and Timothy's special gift is as much missing as is the link between themselves and the power to work miracles in the evangelist Philip.

5. Only that which pertained to the ordinary out-workings of the gospel was intended for the period that would come after the complete giving of "the per-

fect law of liberty." The divinely given right to lay hands on others was not an empty right, but it always bestowed something. But to lay sinful hands on empty heads, or empty hands on sinful heads, is a dead formality, and a religious farce. Roman Catholic bishops, and other high officials in the Romish church, lay sinful hands on sinful heads, and, thereby, presume to bestow so-called "official grace." Many Protestant denominations, while denying the mentioned presumption, have followed Rome's example in the dead formality of laying on of hands. On this question those denominations have shown themselves to be daughters of Rome, even as they have thus shown themselves in regard to instrumental music and other humanisms. The same has been true of the digressive Christian church. Apostolic disciples should not follow their example in those respects, nor in any others that require perversion, nor straining of scripture. Therefore, we should keep clear of the empty performance of placing hands on men without transmitting anything to them, or giving to them anything that they did not have before except, perhaps, official conceit, or conceit in regard to official authority.

Many years ago a preacher of Christ and an elder of the Church of Christ were together walking across a field. The elder inquired of the preacher, "Does the Holy Spirit now make men overseers of the church?" The preacher answered by asking, "Does the Holy Spirit now make men Christians?" The elder said, "Yes." Then the preacher inquired, "How?" The elder answered by saying, "The Holy Spirit informs us that sinners must believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, and requires the church as the pillar and ground of the truth to baptize them when they confess

their faith in Christ, even as Philip baptized the Ethiopian. Then, when they have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered in the gospel the Holy Spirit declares that they are free from sin, and have become the servants of righteousness. This means that they are Christians, when all this has been accomplished." The preacher said to the elder, "You have answered your own question in regard to overseers. The Holy Spirit informs us of the qualifications which those must have who are to be chosen for overseers. He informs us also that the church is required to select them according to qualifications. This is implied by the record given in Acts 6th chapter in regard to selecting men for the work which deacons are to perform. When the church makes its selection aright, then the Holy Spirit sanctions the work of selecting. Thus it is that the Holy Spirit now makes overseers."

Now we are prepared to consider that some man may say, "I think the authority which elders have should *come down* rather than *come up*—should *come down from above* rather than *come up from the congregation*." In answer to this we may safely say that when the church makes selection of a man who, by obeying the Holy Spirit, has qualified himself to be an overseer, then the authority *does come down from above*. The Holy Spirit states the qualifications, and the Holy Spirit sets forth the teaching which a man must obey in order to develop those qualifications. Then the Holy Spirit indicates the procedure that the church should adopt in selecting the man for overseer. When all this has been done, according to the Holy Spirit's directions, then all the authority that a man has in the office of overseer, or bishop, in the eldership of the church, certainly *comes down from above*.

But the less a man who is to be chosen, or is chosen, to be an overseer, thinks of *authority* vested in himself the better it will be for him, and for the church that may choose him. The *authority* is all found in the word of God, and as a humble servant of the church the business of the overseer is to do everything which that word requires of him, in a humble manner. The same is true of deacons and evangelists. The less men think and say about their *authority* the better it will be for them, especially in the Church of Christ. As a rule, the more a man is disposed to think of *authority* the less he is fitted for official position in the church, or any where else. Though elders and deacons are, more than any others, responsible for the work of executing, or carrying out, the divine will, in the congregations that choose them, yet they should attend to that work as humble *servants*, and not as *bosses*. All elders, deacons, and evangelists, who have the idea of *authority* encircling in their little heads should study these words of the Savior: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and that they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." See Matthew 20:25-28. This was spoken to the apostles who were to be the highest earthly officials in the church, and it should cause all ideas of our authority, or greatness, to be banished.

The elders and deacons who think of their *authority* very seldom consult the congregation as they should. But they will take charge of the Lord's day meetings,

and of the contributions. They will seldom call on anyone else to preside at the table, or take any other part in the meetings. The elders who are of that class will employ a preacher without consulting the members that are expected to help in supporting him. The deacons who are of that disposition will not report to the congregation the amounts of money received in the contributions, nor how the money is used. They will think they have *authority* to transact business for the church. As a result certain members will begin to complain. Dissatisfaction will arise, contributions will grow less, and soon the church will begin to go down. Sometimes it will divide into factions. As a result protracted meetings will, generally, prove to be a failure, and the name of Christ will be disgraced in the community where such a church meets.

What is the remedy for all this where it exists? What is the teaching which will avoid all this? The Savior's words, as already quoted in regard to being servants, must be considered. Then the 6th chapter of Acts must be considered. The apostles had authority to do everything connected with the church. Being discerners of spirits they were best qualified to select men for the deaconship. But instead of taking the entire matter into their own hands they called the multitude of the disciples together. They laid the matter before them. And that which they said "pleased the whole multitude." As a result, everything on that occasion was done in a satisfactory manner. And this is the only plan by which a congregation can be kept in a favorable frame of mind, and be led to co-operate with the officers. Those officers who don't know this much, or don't care whether the congregation is kept in a favorable frame of mind or not, *are not fit for their*

positions. If they will not learn this much they will scatter the church. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be.

The apostles consulted the congregation in regard to the selection of men for the work which deacons are required to do. The evangelists are required to follow the example of the apostles in this particular. Therefore, they must consult the congregation in selecting both deacons and elders. Then, the deacons and elders must follow the same example in selecting preachers, and in transacting all other business for the church. They must do this if they would have the church to be united, and happy, and prosperous. This does not mean that the deacons cannot buy a can of coal oil, or a broom, without consulting the church. Such affairs are among the ordinary matters which all expect to have done. Yet even these may, with advantage, sometimes be mentioned before the church. How easy it is for a deacon to ask, "Brethren, do you know where we can get the best grade of coal oil, and the best kind of fuel for our use here?" Such a question may be of great value to a church. But especially should the question of employing a sexton, the insurance of the meeting-house, the fencing of the meeting-house yard, and other matters of importance and expense be brought before the church. A business meeting is the best occasion for such matters to be decided on. Yet many of them can be disposed of within five minutes just before dismissing the audience on Lord's day. This can certainly be done if all the members love peace, and thus have the spirit of forbearance. But contentious spirits will make use of such occasions to show themselves. If a congregation has one or two such spirits in it, then it will need to have a greater

number of business meetings. In such meetings the contentious ones can be reasoned with and exposed, till they will be known and read of all the congregation. In course of time all such spirits go to their own place.

The question of "church discipline" needs now to be considered. A big protracted meeting generally lays the foundation for much "church discipline," as it is generally spoken of. The first five or ten, perhaps fifteen or twenty, that surrender to the gospel in a single meeting, generally do so by reason of conviction. After that, if the preacher is not very careful, most of those who obey are led to do so largely because others have obeyed. As a result, they are baptized with mingled motives. As a further result they soon lose interest in the question of religion after the protracted meeting is ended. All such will soon need the attention of the elders. If the needed attention will not be properly and promptly given they will soon disgrace the church. Older members will then say, "That protracted meeting was a bad thing for the church."

John the Baptist seems to have had his fears "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism." For that reason, probably, he broke forth on them with this speech: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." But preachers of Christ often seem to think, when sinners begin to obey the gospel freely, "Now is my time to hold a big meeting—the *biggest* meeting of my life." As a result, they do not warn the people as John the Baptist did, but spend their time more and more in pleading with them and coaxing them. Thus many obey without proper teaching, and the church is soon burdened with backsliders.

In view of all this, the elders of the church should not take anything for granted. They should not presume that any of the young members will know their duty as Christians without special instructions "publicly and from house to house." The instruction given should be to this effect: We cannot live the life of Christians without daily reading of the Bible and prayer, and all our prayers should be offered to the Father in the name of Christ. To this should be added, that whenever a mistake has been made it should be repented of at once, and if we have done wrong to others, then we should acknowledge it to them promptly, and ask their pardon. Warning should then be given against that contemptible dodge which is expressed by the words, "If I have done wrong I am sorry for it." We cannot be sorry for that which we do not admit has any existence. Therefore we cannot be sorry for a wrong that we do not acknowledge has been committed. How to read the Bible so as to understand it, and the importance of reading for the purpose of growing in grace or favor, as well as in knowledge, should be impressed on the minds of young converts.

By such instruction as that just suggested the doctrine of self-discipline is set forth. Paul referred to this when he wrote, "But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." See 1st Corinthians 9: 27. At this juncture the discipline of every member of the church should begin so as to avoid public discipline by the church. And if self-discipline be practiced by all the members the question of public church discipline will be settled.

But some supposed converts will not be forewarned. They will think that they are strong enough to live the

life of Christians without daily reading and prayer, and without the weekly communion. As a result, they will soon go back to the world, which, perhaps, they never left very far. *Their conceit will prove their ruin.* Thus it has been; and thus it will be. The elders will need to look after such in order to save the church from disgrace, and ruin. The best way to do this is to consult the church and try to secure the best preacher to preach to the church. Let him preach and exhort, reprove and rebuke, and spend his time chiefly in dealing with the importance of those who have been baptized being whole-hearted Christians. When a meeting of this kind has been held for two or three weeks, then let the church have a business meeting, and all who will not have been reclaimed should be visited once, or oftener, by one, or two, of the elders, or by some one appointed by them. Such an appointment may, in some instances, be made with advantage when the wayward one is supposed to prefer some one else, or to be more ready to listen to some one else than to the elders. The end in view is to save the erring one. If that cannot be done, then the end in view is to save the church from the evil effect of that one's misconduct.

When an exclusion from the church must be made, then a business meeting should be held for that purpose. As a church can never tell what may arise when an exclusion is to be made, the Lord's day is not the best time to attend to it. But a special meeting should, generally, be called for that purpose, of which the erring one should be duly notified by writing, or by two witnesses. The writing should, generally, be handed to the one for whom it is intended, and not sent through the mail, unless registered. It is easy for a wrong doer to make this excuse, "I never got your notice,"

and make capital out of an exclusion without a notice.

When every precaution has been taken to avoid mistakes, and to keep the church clear of reproach, then one of the elders should bring the case of the erring one before the congregation assembled. He should make a plain statement of it. After that the elder should ask, "In view of all this, does any one present know any scriptural reason why the fellowship of the church should not be withdrawn from this one whose case is now before us?" If a scriptural reason is not given, then the fellowship of the church should be declared withdrawn from that one. If a reason that is supposed to be scriptural is offered it should be considered. If a member of the church asks for more time in order that the erring one may be further reasoned with it should be granted; at least, a few days or a week or more should be granted. But when all scriptural efforts will have failed, then the exclusion should be pronounced with due solemnity, and the meeting should be ended with a prayer for the church, and for all the erring ones.

The procedure just suggested is all justified under Paul's celebrated saying, in regard to the church, "Let all things be done decently and in order." (See 1st Corinthians 14: 40.) When a church proceeds after that manner, and makes entry of its procedure in its record, then it will have pursued a course which will commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. One meeting of that kind every year, and more than one when necessary, will do more towards keeping the church pure, and causing it to be respected before the world than anything else that can be done.

The Greek word translated "church," in the New Testament, means "called out," and thus means "separ-

ated." When a church consists of persons who have been "called out" from the world by the gospel, and will then keep itself separated from the world, certainly it is the divine arrangement for the conversion of sinners and the perfection of believers. It is God's perfect plan to accomplish those important ends, and, thus, prepare mankind for an entrance into the everlasting kingdom. God desires to be worshiped, in this world, by pure and tried spirits, and he desires that, in the world to come, such spirits shall be with him forever. To accomplish that desire He has caused his church to be established. God has stamped perfection on the entire domain of nature which is to perish. And He certainly has not ordained a defective arrangement to accomplish ends which are eternal.

This subject of church government has not been exhausted by the foregoing remarks. Yet sufficient has been said to indicate the beauty and simplicity, and straight-forward outworking, of that divine arrangement called *church government* as set forth in the New Testament. That arrangement must be carried out in order for the church to be saved from reproach before the world. And this must be done that it may be effective in converting sinners and perfecting believers. Only when the divine teaching, concerning its government is strictly regarded is it, or can it be, the pillar and ground of the truth.

But this discourse should not be ended without a few statements concerning the discipline of elders or bishops. Paul indicated that some elders would go wrong. See Acts 20: 30. And in church history we learn that the apostasy, or falling away, from the simplicity of the gospel, which resulted in the Greek and Roman Catholic churches being established, was chiefly

made in the eldership. In view of this Paul wrote to Timothy about disciplining an elder. See 1st Timothy 5: 19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses." The Greek preposition here translated by the word "before" in the Common Version of the Sacred Text means "before," or "in the presence of" when reference is made to judicial procedure. See Parkhurst's Lexicon, and examine Matthew 10: 18, 1st Corinthians 6: 1, 1st Timothy 6: 13. These scriptures could not be translated "at the mouth of," neither should 1st Timothy 5: 19 be thus translated. Paul commanded Timothy to be careful in receiving an accusation against an elder, and that he should have witnesses to the fact that some one accused an elder before him, lest that one might afterwards deny it, and leave Timothy without support in his effort to deal with such accusation. This indicates that an evangelist is the proper one to receive and test charges against an elder that is under charges. Preachers, deacons, and all other members of the church are subject to the discipline of the church through its elders, who are to conduct the work of disciplining such when they need it. But when the church needs to discipline *an elder*, then it should call *an evangelist*, or *several evangelists*, to examine the charges and the testimony that may be offered against the accused one. An evangelist is generally called on to be with a church when it selects elders, and Paul here indicates that an evangelist should be called on when a church needs to discipline elders. The doctrine that elders should discipline elders is an assumption without an intimation in scripture. According to 1st Timothy 5: 19 an *evangelist* should be called on by the church to assist in such cases of discipline.

But this does not mean that evangelists of their own accord may discipline elders. Nor does it mean that they are in supreme authority in trying charges against elders. But the fact that they are authorized to receive "an accusation" against an elder implies the testing of such accusation by examination of testimony, and deciding whether or not the accusation is sustained, and reporting the same to the church. Then the church is required to deal with the accused elder according to the decision rendered by the evangelist, whether that decision be one of guilt or innocence. If a church finally decides to retain a guilty elder, then an evangelist is helpless to avoid it, except by scriptural reasoning and exhortation. He does not have any authority to depose nor exclude a guilty elder, regardless of the will of the church, for the church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

Reader, I trust that you now understand the question of discipline as set forth in the New Testament, and that you may henceforth go onward in the right way, and finally enter the Christian's home in glory.