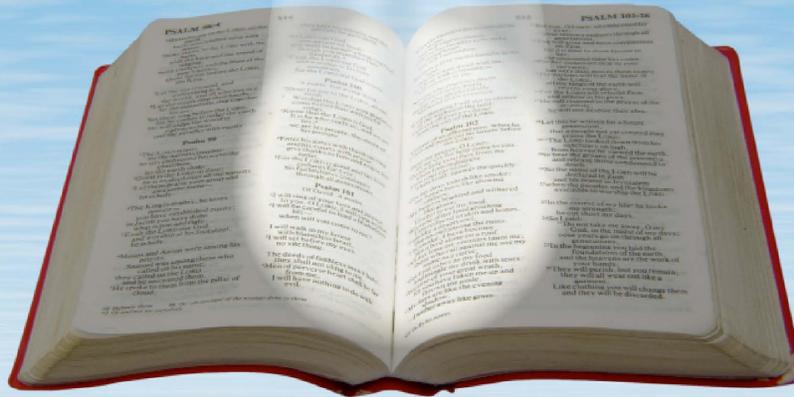


Basic Bible Doctrine



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Our Wonderful Bible

“Thy testimonies are wonderful”
(Psalm 119:129).

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

The Bible never calls itself “the Bible”. But we use this name more than any other when referring to God’s Word.

Where did this Holy Book get the name “Bible”? It is interesting that the word *paper* and the word *Bible* both come from the same plant. Papyrus reeds grow in the marshes near the Nile river. Many centuries ago Egyptians discovered that the inner bark of these reeds, when dried and woven together, could be written upon. The word *paper* comes from *papyrus*.

The Greek word for that inner bark itself is *biblos*, which gradually came to mean “book,” because that’s what many ancient books were written on. So, we get the word *Bible* from *biblos*; and it means “book.”

But the Bible is not merely a book. It is *THE* Book of all books. Millions of useful volumes have been written during the past dozen centuries. But the greatest of them is a poor excuse for second-best when compared to the value the Bible has been, is, and will continue to be for mankind.

“Bring the Book.” Sir Walter Scott begged as he lay dying.

The servant scanned the shelf of books that Scott had written. Finally, he asked, “Which book, sir?”

“*THE* Book. There is but one Book; bring the Bible,” came the famous reply.

“This is the Book worth more than all other books which were ever printed.” - *Patrick Henry*

“The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance. In all my perplexities and distress the Bible never failed to give me light and strength.” - *Robert E. Lee*

“There is no solid basis for civilization but in the Word of God. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper. I make it my practice to read through the Bible every year.” - *Daniel Webster*

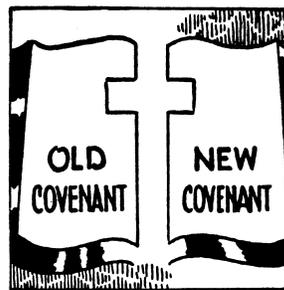
“It is impossible rightly to govern the world without God and the Bible.” - *George Washington*

“The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty.”
- *Thomas Jefferson*

“A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world if he has deprived himself of the Bible.”
- *Woodrow Wilson*

“The Bible is the rock on which our republic rests.”
- *Andrew Jackson*

Yes, there is a great difference between the books men make and the Book that makes men! The Bible was the first volume to be printed (1450 A.D.), and it remains the best-seller to this day. Probably about 50 million (a stack of Bibles 100 miles high) are published every year.



•••••
• Old Testament •
• 3 & 9 = 39 books •
• New Testament •
• 3 X 9 = 27 books •
• Bible = 66 books •
•••••

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The Bible is divided into two major divisions: The Old Testament and The New Testament. The word *Testament* means *Covenant* (or agreement). The Old Testament forms the background for the New Testament, and deals with God’s agreement with mankind *before* the coming of Christ. The New Testament completes the story of His covenant for salvation *after* the coming of Christ.

The Bible is also called *The Scripture* or *The Scriptures*. These terms mean “Holy Writings.” Before the printing press, copies were written by

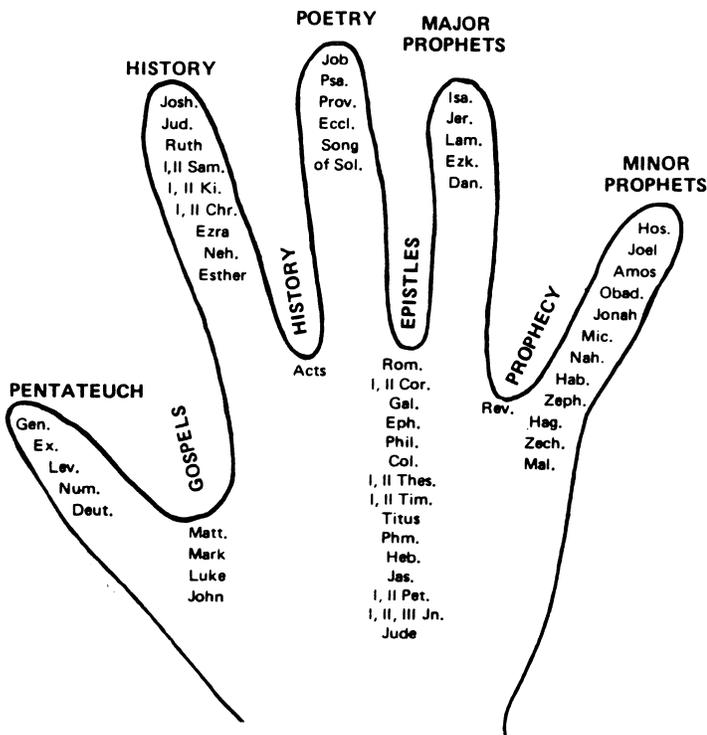
hand. The early Christians of New Testament history usually referred to God’s Word as “The Scriptures.”

But of all the names given to the Bible, *The Word of God* is doubtless the most impressive, significant and complete. The Bible does not simply *contain* the Word of God; *it is* the Word of God. The Lord moved upon men to write exactly what He knew we needed to know.

If you don’t already know them, you should learn the divisions and names of the books of the Bible.

Now, you can learn the five divisions of the Old Testament quickly by associating them with the five fingers, as illustrated. Let the thumb represent the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the law), etc.

Use the space between your fingers to help you remember the books in the four divisions of the New Testament.



HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD?

That is a good question, a question that should be asked and answered. God gives us internal as well as external proofs that the Bible comes from Him.

1. The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God.

More than 2,500 times the Scripture uses phrases like, “God said...the Lord has said...thus saith the Lord,” etc. No other book makes such claims, nor would God permit such statements to endure throughout centuries if they came from an imposter. God has made it clear that He is speaking to us in the Bible.

2. Marvelous Preservation.

An external proof that the Bible came from God is the fact that it cannot be destroyed. Jeremiah told us about an Old Testament king who cut the Scriptures to pieces with a penknife, then burned the pieces. But it was rewritten, and is still here today.

Down through the centuries millions of copies of the Bible have been burned. But it still remains.

Ingersoll once held up a copy of the Bible and said, “In fifteen years I’ll have this book in the morgue.” Fifteen years rolled by. Ingersoll was in the morgue. But the Bible lives on.

Voltaire said that within 100 years the Bible would be a forgotten book, found only in museums. One hundred years later, the house where Voltaire made that statement was owned and used by the Geneva Bible Society.

Today, enemies of the Bible in America have outlawed it in schools and many other places. University professors scoff at it. News commentators ridicule it. Even some religious leaders belittle it. But the Bible continues to withstand all attacks.

Century follows century—there it stands.
 Empires rise, fall and are forgotten—there it stands.
 Dynasty succeeds dynasty—there it stands.
 Kings are crowned and uncrowned—there it stands.
 Despised and torn to pieces—there it stands.
 Storms of hate swirl about it—there it stands.
 Atheists rail against it — there it stands.
 Unbelief abandons it — but the Bible still stands.

3. Archaeology

The spade of the archaeologist has discovered many things that confirm the Bible to be the Word of God. A prominent Jewish archaeologist once wrote, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.” On the other hand, archaeology has often confirmed statements in the Bible. Biblical cities, thought to be nonexistent by skeptical historians, have been discovered by archaeologists. The Dead Sea Scrolls and other discovered documents also support the Bible position.

4. Fulfilled Prophecy.

Fulfilled prophecy provides conclusive proof that the Bible is the Word of God, proof that no one can get around. One-fourth of the Scripture, when it was written, was prophetic (announcing things to take place in the future). Hundreds of these prophecies have already been fulfilled — exactly as God said they would be.

For example, prophecies concerning the sequence of the ancient empires have been fulfilled (Daniel 2:37-45): Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian Empire, Medo-Persian Empire, Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, Roman Empire, and the split of the Roman Empire between the East and West. All happened exactly as Daniel prophesied.

Messianic prophecies concerned the coming of Christ. All of those dealing with His first coming were fulfilled. A few of them are shown on Chart 1.

5. Miraculous Unity

Perhaps this should have been listed first. No document can compare with the Bible in its unity and diversity. The Bible was written over a period of nearly 1,600 years by about 40 different men. Only three or four of these writers ever even met each other. It was written in many places, parts in the wilderness, parts in Palestine and in cities from Rome to Babylon. Yet there is not a single contradiction. The only possible explanation is the guiding hand of God.

Chart 1

Prophecies		Fulfillment
Gen. 3:15: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.	Would be the “Seed of a Woman”	Gen. 4:4: But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (Luke 2:7; Rev. 12:5)
Gen. 18:18: Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? (Gen. 12:3)	Promised Seed of Abraham	Acts 3:25: Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. (Mat. 1:1; Luke 3:34)
Gen. 17:19: And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.	Promised Seed of Isaac	Mat. 1:2: Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; (Luke 3:34)
Num. 24:17: I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (Gen. 28:14)	Promised Seed of Jacob	Luke 3:34: Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor, (Mat. 1:2)
Gen 49:10: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.	Will Descend from the Tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33: Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, (Mat. 1, 2, 3)
Isa. 9:7: Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 11:1-5; II Sam. 7:13)	The Heir to the Throne of David	Mat. 1:1: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Mat. 1:6)
Mic. 5:2: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.	Place of Birth	Mat. 2:1: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herond the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (Luke 2:4-7)
Dan. 9:25: Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.	Time of Birth	Luke 2:1,2: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (Luke 2:3-7)

Chart 1, continued

Prophecies		Fulfillment
Isa. 7:14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.	Born of a Virgin	Mat. 1:18: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:26-35)
Jer. 31:15: Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.	Massacre of Infants	Mat. 2:16: Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. (Mat. 2:17, 18)
Hos. 11:1: When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.	Flight into Egypt	Mat. 2:14: When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: (Mat. 2:15)
Isa. 9:1, 2: Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, pon them hath the light shined.	Ministry in Galilee	Mat. 4:12-16: Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison (delivered up), he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalm: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthaim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.
Deut. 18:15: The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;	As a Prophet	John 6:14: Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. (John 1:45; Acts 3:19-26)
Psalms 110:4: The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.	As a Priest, like Melchizedek	Heb. 6:20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Heb. 5:5, 6; 7:15-17)
Isa 53:3: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Psalms 2:2)	His Rejection by Jews	John 1:11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 5:43; Luke 4:29; 17:25, 23:18)
Isaiah 11:2: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; (Psalms 45:7; Isa. 11:3, 4)	Some of His Characteristics	Luke 2:52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. (Luke 4:18)
Zec. 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Isa. 62:11)	His Triumphal Entry	John 12:13, 14: Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written. (Mat. 21:1-11; John 12:12)
Psalms 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.	Betrayed by a Friend	Mark 14:10: And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. (Mat. 26:14-16; Mark 14:43-45)
Zec. 11:12: And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. (Zec. 11:13)	Sold for Thirty Pieces of Silver	Mat. 26:15: And said unto them, what will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. (Mat. 27:3-10)
Zec. 12:10: And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.	His Side to be Pierced	John 19:34: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
Psalms 22:18: They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.	Soldiers Cast Lots for His Coat	Mark 15:24: And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. (John 19:24)
Psalms 34:20: He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. (Exo. 12:46)	Not a Bone to be Broken	John 19:33: But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

6. Scientific accuracy.

The Bible revealed many scientific facts about 3,500 years before man discovered them.

7. Transformed Lives.

The testimonies of millions through the ages give definite proof that the Bible is God's Word. Young and old have found purpose in life. Homes have been saved. People have been freed from the slavery of alcohol, drugs and countless other sins. The Bible has the message and the power to turn a sinner into a saint.

Yes, *the Bible is the divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God!* The term "inspiration" as used in II Timothy 3:16 means "God-breathed". The Bible was given by verbal-plenary inspiration. The word *verbal* means the very words were written down as dictated by the Lord. *Plenary* means that inspiration was full or complete and extends to all of the Bible, not just a part. All Scripture is God-breathed, or given by inspiration.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

by Dwight L. Moody

The Bible is a storehouse of whose contents no one can afford to be ignorant. It repays reading and study whether it be approached merely because of its literary value, or its ethical teachings, or its practical bearing on everyday life, as, for instance, in the Book of Proverbs. While such reading may bring a measure of blessing, however, in accordance with the Scripture—"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3)—I believe that God reveals His deeper truths to the eye of faith. Those who come to the Bible in a devotional spirit, seeking to know more of God and His will regarding us, are the most blessed.

Hence it is necessary, at the very beginning, that the reader shall be a partaker of that new life which alone can digest heavenly food. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor 2:14. But they that are after the Spirit, who have been born of the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit,

and the Spirit-breathed Word is sweeter to them than honey and the honeycomb.

I believe further that the reader must have faith in the Bible, and a love for it, before he will receive much good from it. As Pascal said: "Human knowledge must be understood to be loved, but divine knowledge must be loved to be understood." Those who are full of doubts will never be much blessed. The Book comes to us as a whole with the same authority, and no man has a right to cut out any portion. Did you ever notice that the things that men cavil about most are the very things that Christ set His seal to? The story of Noah and the flood; of Lot's wife; of the brazen serpent; of Jonah and the whale—Christ taught them all, and if I give them up, I must give up all Christ's teaching. What we want is a faith that believes in the Bible from cover to cover.

Suggestions as to Bible Study

1. Read the Bible as intelligently as you would read anything else.

If I receive a letter from my wife eight pages long, and read the fourth page today, the last page tomorrow, then turn back to the first page, it will be unintelligible to me. To grasp it intelligently I must begin at the beginning and read through it in order.

Now the Bible is not only a book in itself, with one distinct purpose running through it from Genesis to Revelation, but it is also a collection of sixty-six books, each complete in itself. Therefore, it is only fair and reasonable, if you want to understand it, that you should read them through.

2. Do not read too fast or too much. Butterflies cover more ground, but bees gather more honey. Imitate the bees.

Studying goes deeper than mere reading. There are surface nuggets to be gathered, but the best of the gold is underneath; and it takes time and labor to secure it. Skimming over large areas of truth is not so profitable as the careful turning of every passage.

3. Have some definite object in view.

If a friend should see me searching about a room and should say: "Moody, what are you looking for? have you lost something?" and I should reply: "No, I haven't lost anything; I'm not looking for anything in particular," he would think me very foolish. But if I tell him I am looking for something, I may expect him to help me find it.

Numbers of people take the Bible without any definite desire to receive anything out of it. We should hunt it thoroughly for its great truths, and not read at random.

In private devotions or for family prayers select passages as carefully as for public services. All the medicines in a druggist's shop may be helpful, but they have different properties that make them suitable for different cases. In the Bible there is a word for every condition and circumstance of life. Every case is met; but passages should be selected according to the needs of that case. For instance, in time of trouble, read Psalm 91. For consolation in bereavement, turn to John 14 or I Corinthians 15. For devotional reading, turn to the Psalms or Epistles.

4. Learn to feed yourself. The great trouble with most church members is that they don't know how to do this. They have to be fed with an ecclesiastical spoon. If they happen to have a minister who feeds his flock, they get on pretty well; but otherwise their souls are not fed at all, and become lean and starved.

Obtain for use a good Bible, a concordance, and a topical text book. Any Teacher's Bible embraces the two latter, or they can be obtained separately. They form a complete library, and by their aid the Bible can be studied with profit.

Methods of Bible Study

Every man cannot fight in Saul's armor, and perhaps my methods may not suit you; but if one method does not help and interest you, try another.

1. First, the telescopic method; that is, taking a grand sweep of a book or chapter, and trying to find out the main outline. Thus, there are seven leading men in Genesis: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. They stand out like mountain peaks in the course of history. Study their lives and times, and you will have a fair grasp of the whole book. Similarly, there are ten great sermons in the Book of Acts—five preached by Peter, one by Stephen, and four by Paul. When you know the circumstances under which these were preached, etc., you will have a general idea of the Book of Acts.

2. Another method is the very opposite of this—the microscopic method—when you take a verse or section and analyze it.

Take, as an example, Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The text naturally divides into three sections. (1) "Be not deceived." Now take a topical text book and see what the Bible says about deceiving; who deceives us; how we are deceived, etc. (2) "God is not mocked." What is the Bible meaning of "mocking"? Do men ever try to mock God? Can He be deceived? Etc. (3) "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Not the certainty of the reaping—"shall"; the two kinds of sowing and reaping—sowing to the flesh and a harvest of corruption, or sowing to the Spirit and a harvest of everlasting life; that a man reaps the same kind as he sows, and more than he sows—some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some an hundredfold, etc.

3. Study of subjects or topics. It has been well said that we must not read the Bible by the blue light of Presbyterianism, or by the red light of Methodism, or by the violet light of Episcopalianism, but by the light of the Spirit of God. Between conflicting opinions, most Christians are in dense ignorance regarding the most fundamental doctrines of our religion. What they should do is take the Bible and study for themselves.

4. The study of words and expressions. Here you take a word or expression and follow it through the whole Bible, or through some particular book or section, with the help of a concordance.

For instance, in the second chapter of Habakkuk there are five "woes" against five common sins: (1) "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his!" (2) "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house!" (3) "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!" (4) "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink!" (5) "Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!"

Again:

Faint not in prayer. (Luke 18:1.)

Faint not in confidence. (2 Corinthians 4:1.)

Faint not in hope. (2 Corinthians 4:16.)

Faint not in well-doing. (Galatians 6:9.)

Faint not at tribulations. (Ephesians 3:13.)

Faint not under chastening and rebuke.

(Hebrews 12:5.)

Study in the same way the seven *blesseds* and the eight *overcomes* of Revelation; the *better things* of Hebrews; the *believings* and the *I ams* of John; *the fear of the Lord* in Proverbs; the seven *walks* of Ephesians; three *sound things* in Titus; the seven *forty days* of Scripture; five *much mores* in the fifth chapter of Romans; *with one accord* in Acts; six *precious things* in Peter's epistles, etc.

5. Another profitable study is Bible characters. Take one man and follow him from the cradle to the grave.

Here let me say that the key to the whole Bible is Jesus Christ. You remember that, on the way to Emmaus with those two disciples, "beginning at Moses and *all* the prophets, He [Jesus] expounded unto them in *all* the scriptures the things concerning himself." Notice those two *alls*. The one theme of the Old Testament, in type and prophecy, is the Messiah; and the New Testament deals with His life on earth, and with the Church, which is His body, and with His coming glory.

Do not expect ever to exhaust the full meaning of Scripture. A supernatural God must have a supernatural Book. Finite minds cannot grasp the infinite. That is one reason why men who know the Bible best find it ever new.

Talmage has said that as the smallest dewdrop on the meadow at night has a star sleeping in its bosom, so the most insignificant passage of Scripture has in it a shining truth. Spurgeon said that the flowers of God's garden bloom, not only double, but sevenfold; they are continually pouring forth fresh fragrance. George Muller wrote that he had read the Bible through a hundred times in order, and every time with increasing joy. Whenever he started afresh, it seemed like a new Book to him.

I thank God there is in it a height I have never been able to reach, a depth I have never been able to fathom, a length and a breadth I know nothing about. It makes the Book all the more fascinating and proves it divine.

The One True God

"For I am God, and there is none else"
(Isaiah 45:22).

The Bible says only "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 53:1). But even about that person, Dr. E.Y. Mullins used to say, "He said it in his heart; his head knew better." Everything around us and above us testifies that there is a God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

One night Napoleon sat listening to an argument among his officers. Some were ridiculing religion. Others went so far as to deny the very existence of God. Presently Napoleon stood, pointed to the stars above and said: "Gentlemen, you may conceivably be right; but, if so, who made those stars?"

The Bible starts with the words "In the beginning God..." God does not present an argument to prove or explain His existence. He gives no definition of God nor a description of Himself in Genesis 1:1. He simply makes a statement: "In the beginning God..."

However, this simple statement does refute some of man's foolish ideas: (1) It denies atheism with its doctrine of no God; (2) it puts polytheism to death because it does not refer to one of many gods, but to the one God; (3) it refutes those who say that matter is eternal, because it states there was a beginning; (4) it denies fatalism (with its doctrine of chance) and evolution, because it said "God created."

Oliver B. Greene reminds us: "God is infinite; man is finite. It is impossible for man to comprehend God—and I am exceedingly thankful for this great truth—for if man could understand God, then God would be no greater than man. I am so glad that the God whom I love and serve and in whom I trust is greater in power, love and wisdom than any mortal."

Although we cannot fully understand or comprehend God as long as we dwell in this body, God does reveal much about Himself in the Bible.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

WHAT ARE HIS ATTRIBUTES?

"Attribute" is a theological term which simply means characteristic, nature, or, in this case, what

Chart 2

The Sacred Library

Arranged by R. H. Richards

Date Written	Period Covered	Writer	Book	No. of Chap.	Class	Occupations of some of the writers. Job - Land Owner, Cattle Herder Moses - Prince, Shepherd, Lawgiver Joshua - Brickmaker, General Samuel - Priest, Prophet, Judge David - Shepherd, Soldier, Muscian, Poet, King Daniel - Prince, Prime-Minister Nehemiah - Councillor, Seer, Cupbearer, Scribe Mordecai - Doorkeeper, Ruler Ezra - Priest, Scribe Matthew - Tax Collector Luke - Physician Peter, James and John - Fishermen Paul - Tentmaker		Class	No. of Chap.	Book	Writer	Date Written
B.C. 1491-51 1491-51 1491-51 1491-51 1491-51	2369 years 215 years 1 month 38 years 5 weeks	Moses (Probably in the Desert of Arabia)	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	50 40 27 36 34	5 Books Moses, Law Pentateuch	Old Testament Books 39	New Testament Books 27	4 Gospels	28 16 24 21	Matthew Mark Luke John	A.D. 50-60 60 57-63 97	
1430 1060 1120 1060 976-610	30 years 400 years 154 years 427 years	Joshua Samuel? {Samuel, Gad, Nathan Jeremiah or Ezra Ezra Ezra Nehemiah† Mordecai*	Joshua Judges Ruth I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings I Chronicles II Chronicles Ezra② Nehemiah② Esther	24 21 4 31 24 20 25 29 36 10 13 10	12 Books of History			History	28	Luke	63	
590 588 457 446 452	3468 years 79 years 30 years 10 years	Job {Moses, David and others Solomon Solomon Solomon	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	42 150 31 12 8	5 Books of Poetry			14 Pauline Epistles or Letters	16 16 13 6 6 4 4 5 3 6 4 3 1 15	Romans I Corinthians II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I Thessalonians II Thessalonians I Timothy II Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews	58 57 58 54 62 62 62 52 53 66 67 67 62 63	
1890 1450-450 1000 900 1000	? 1000 years ? 62 years 42 years	Job {Moses, David and others Solomon Solomon Solomon	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	42 150 31 12 8	5 Books of Poetry			7 General Epistles	5 5 3 5 1 1 1	James I Peter II Peter I John II John III John Jude	45 63 65 96 97 97 65	
760-698 629-588 588 595-524 606-534	62 years 42 years 588 21 years 70 years	Isaiah† Jeremiah*† Jeremiah† Ezekiel* Daniel*	Isaiah Jeremiah① Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	66 52 5 48 12	5 Major Prophets			Prophesy	22	Revelation	97	
785-725 810-660 860-785 588-583 856-784 758-699 720-698 612-598 640-609 520 518 436-397	60 years 150 years 25 years 5 years 758-699 720-698 612-598 640-609 520 518 436-397	Hosea† Joel† Amos† Obadiah† Jonah† Micah† Nahum† Habakkuk† Zephaniah† Haggai † Zechariah† Malachi†	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk① Zephaniah① Haggai② Zechariah② Malachi②	14 3 9 1 4 7 3 3 3 2 14 4	12 Minor Prophets			7 General Epistles	5 5 3 5 1 1 1	James I Peter II Peter I John II John III John Jude	45 63 65 96 97 97 65	
								Prophesy	22	Revelation	97	
<p>Forty writers, all Hebrews except, possibly, two—Job and Luke. Writing covered a period of nearly 1,600 years, from about 1500 B.C. to 97 A.D. For 450 years, between the writing of the last book of the Old and the first book of the New, the Holy Spirit was silent; so there could have been no collusion between the Prophets and those who wrote the fulfillment of the prophecies.</p>												
<p>Matthew, a Jew, wrote to prove that Jesus was the long-looked-for Messiah, the fulfiller of prophecy. Mark, a Jew, wrote to Gentiles, probably the Romans; brevity and vividness principal characteristics. Luke, probably a Gentile physician, wrote to Gentiles; shows the humanity of Christ, the Divine Man. John, a Jew—the beloved disciple—tells what Jesus was, the Son of God; Doctrinal Gospel; Gospel of love; Life through faith in Christ. Last third of book relates to last twenty-four hours of Christ's life on earth.</p>												

x—Contemporary

①—Contemporary

②—Contemporary

*—During the Captivity in Babylon

†—Before the Captivity in Babylon

‡—After the Captivity in Babylon

God is like. Among the attributes of God we discover in the Bible are:

1. God is a Person. God is not a law, a principle, an idea, a thing, a force, a process or a symbol. There could be no life without a living Being. You are a person, created in the image of a Person. See Genesis 1:26-27.

Paul spoke of God's personal presence when he said, "Though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). This reminds us that He is accessible and approachable for the Christian.

2. God is Spirit. Jesus made this statement in John 4:24. Although God is a Person or Personality, He is not a superman with a body of flesh. He is a Spirit being, free from the limitations that a body imposes. See John 4:24, I Corinthians 3:16, Psalm 139:7, John 15:26-27.

3. God is Invisible. God does have a form, or an image (Hebrews 1:3), but our human eyes are not capable of seeing Him.

At the times when God has appeared before man, they did not see His actual appearance, but His glory. See Exodus 33:18-23 and chapter 34). We might compare God's appearance to the sun. We say we see the sun. But we cannot see the body of the sun, which is 93 million miles away, with the naked eye; we only see its light, a mere reflection of it.

4. God is Eternal. Before the first star traveled its course through the vastness of outer space, before the sun first threw its flood of light, energy, and warmth through space, before the great Milky Way appeared in the heavens, God WAS! God is eternal—without beginning. There has never been a time when God was not; there will never BE a time when God is not. God exists and works in the eternal NOW: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, THOU ART GOD" (Psalm 90:1-2).

5. God is holy. The psalmist says: "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3). The seraphim of Isaiah hide their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). In the Apocalypse, the living creatures around the throne continuously cry: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). Jesus taught that God is holy, and the only holy One.

6. God is wise. Paul could not declare his conception of the wisdom of God, and found it necessary to resort to exclamation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). And then Paul asks: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

7. God is loving, merciful, good. Paul speaks of the "riches of his goodness." "Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

John says, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8).

Jesus says, "God so loved the world," and believers get excited about the words in Romans 8:35-39.

8. God is just. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

9. God is omnipotent [all powerful]. To Abraham, he said, "I am the Almighty God" (Genesis 17:1). Many times he is called Almighty. "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3). "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place" (Job 26:7), and "the heavens as a curtain" (Isaiah 40:22), "and hangeth the earth up on nothing" (Job 26:7). He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, . . . comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Isaiah 40:12). Read Matthew 28:18 and Revelation 1:8.

10. God is omniscient [knows everything]. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). See Psalms 33:13; 147:5; Daniel 2:20-22.

11. God is omnipresent [present everywhere]. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? said the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:24).

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 (Psalm 139:7-10).

Also, see Genesis 16:13; I Kings 8:27 and Proverbs 15:3.

12. God is a Trinity. The word “trinity” is from two Latin words: “tri” (three) and “unus” (one), meaning three-in-one. There are not three Gods, for He plainly says that God is one Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Hebrew word translated “one” in this verse is a plural word. It has the same meaning as when God says husband and wife shall be one flesh. It has a compound unity just as we speak of one family (although made up of several members) or one herd of cattle or one crowd of people.

God’s creation is full of trinities. Man is a trinity, a three-fold being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; I Thessalonians 5:23). In the last reference, note that we are “spirit and soul and body.”

Electricity gives off light, feeling and heat. One equilateral triangle has three equal angles and three equal sides. But none of these correctly illustrate the Trinity because God the Father is not a part of God, neither is the Son or the Holy Spirit a part of God. Each is fully God.

Perhaps we could illustrate with the chemical formula H₂O. When two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen are liquid, they form what we call water. When they are hot, they produce steam; when they are cold, they are ice. All three forms are the same chemical formula, but are manifested in different forms.

Three candles in one candelabra will give off one light for the room. God is one in essence, but three in Person.

13. God is Infinite: Psalm 147:5; Job 11:7; I Kings 8:12; Psalm 145:3; Acts 17:25. Infinite is from the Latin “in” (not) and “finis” (limit), so the word means “not limited.” Note these definitions: Having no boundaries or limits; extending without end; All-embracing; absolute; perfect. God is not limited as to time, presence, knowledge, power, or anything.

14. God is self-existent. “Neither is (he) worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any

thing” (Acts 17:25). Thus God is independently and spiritually self-existent.

15. God is the source of life and being. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” Acts 17:25).

16. God is the ruler of events. He “hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26).

17. God is Faithful: Neh. 1:5; I Kings 8:56; II Peter 3:9; I Corinthians 10:13.

18. God is Immutable [unchanging]: Numbers 23:19; Mal. 3:6; Hebrews 1:12; Hebrews 6:17; James 1:17.

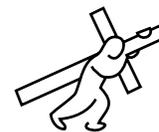
19. God is Impartial: Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:8-9.

20. God is Merciful, Gracious, Longsuffering: Exodus 34:6, Psalm 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Hebrews 2:17.

21. God is Love: I John 4:8 (7-10); Romans 5:8; Ephesians 3:17-19.

Only the true God has these qualities and these are only a few of the attributes of God.

Look at all these qualities of God and you will see His wonderful power and provision for man. If we looked only at His justice and power, we would be afraid, for man has sinned, is an enemy to God, and deserves judgment. But when we look at His love and mercy and all His wonderful attributes, we know we can have peace with Him. God manifested His love by sending His Son to die for us. Through Him we can be reconciled to God.



PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

by Dr. Julian Pope

In these lessons we shall study the essential teachings of Christ. They are essential because:

1. They pertain to the very being of God and His Son. Without these truths, God is no different from other deities and Christ is just another messiah.

2. They are unique. One of the many titles of Christ is “Wonderful” (Isaiah 9:6). This means “unique, one of a kind, no other like Him.” No other religion can make these claims. Without them, Christianity is not superior to other religions.

3. Man’s salvation depends on these truths. No other religion has a plan of salvation: deliverance from sin, a glorified body for God’s children, eternal life, and a real wonderful place called Heaven.

4. They affect the integrity of the Bible. If you cannot believe these truths literally, then you cannot believe in the verbal inspiration and authority of God’s word.

5. The five basic teachings we will consider along with the inspiration of the Bible, are most attacked by Satan. Most of the religions of the world contain certain teachings that are similar to the Ten Commandments, certain proverbs, the Golden Rule and other Bible doctrines. But no other religion contains these five teachings which affect the salvation of man.

Satan leads people to disbelieve these teachings or to pervert them. He tempts people to not accept these truths literally. We must be thoroughly grounded in these Bible doctrines to avoid being deceived by Satan, and so that we can lead people to know the truth and be saved.

I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

The virgin birth of Christ means He was conceived by God the Holy Spirit in a virgin, a young woman who had never had relation with a man (Matthew 1:25). It is not sufficient to say that Mary was a young woman, or that she was not married. She had to be a virgin as prophesied.

Life, and the blood that gives life, comes from the father. If a man had been Jesus’ father, then Jesus would have been a sinner like all other people (Romans 5:12).

God being His father, His conception was supernatural and He was without sin. Mary being His mother, His birth was natural. Thus He was both God and man, both divine and human. He is the only man ever born without sin and who lived without sin (John 8:46).

Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-58; 2:1-40; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:5

II. THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

1. Christ is God, Co-existent and Equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit: John 1:1-4; 14-18; 17:24; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:17; Matthew 28:18.

2. Christ is God Incarnate (in flesh); Isaiah 9:6. Note: “a son is given.” This shows His divinity and pre-existence. Note “a child is born.” This shows His humanity. Thus God became flesh: Romans 1:3; 8:3; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15.

Compare Psalm 110:1 and 132:11 with Matthew 22:41-45 and Acts 2:34-36. Note that Christ was a descendant of David (therefore, human) and that He was David’s Lord (therefore, divine). The only explanation is that Jesus Christ is both God and man.

3. Christ possesses all the attributes of God:

He is eternal: John 17:5; Revelation 1:8.

Omnipotent (all-powerful): Matthew 28:18, Hebrews 1:3, Revelation 1:8.

Omnipresent (present everywhere): Matthew 18:20, John 3:13.

Omniscient (knows everything): John 1:47-51; 4:16-18, 30; 21:17.

Immutable (unchanging): Hebrews 1:12; 13:8.

Creator: John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-18.

4. Christ possesses all the attributes of man except sin.

Grew in wisdom and stature: Luke 2:52

He ate: Mark 2:15; Luke 24:41, 43, and drank: John 4:7.

He slept: Matthew 8:24, 25.

He was weary: John 4:6.

He wept: John 11:35.

He was tempted: Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15. But remember, Jesus did not sin.

Jesus was all God and all man, a union of God and man (Colossians 2:9). He is God the Son and the Son of Man. Both His divinity and humanity must be emphasized. This makes Jesus unique from all others. This makes Him the perfect Saviour.

Being a man, He is able to take man’s place and die for us; and being God, He is able to save us.

Being a man, He is able to understand us (Hebrews 4:15); and being God, He is able to overcome sin for us (Hebrews 2:18).

III. THE SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF CHRIST

It is not enough to say that Jesus died for us. It is not sufficient to say that He suffered in agony. The fact that His blood was shed does not tell the whole redemption story. Others have suffered and shed their blood, and died for people or a good cause.

But the death of Jesus was unique. His suffering was not merely physical; His very soul died in agony of torment so that we would not have to go to Hell. His blood was precious as was no other's; it was atoning blood, a sacrifice to cover our sin, the only sacrifice that a holy God could accept.

The Bible and Bible teachers use various expressions to describe the work of Christ in our salvation. Some speak of His "vicarious suffering" (from the Latin "vicar" meaning "substitute").

Others say His death was "expiatory" (from "expiate," which means "to completely appease," or "to atone for," or "make amends").

We who are Bible believers like to be quoted as believing in the "blood atonement" of Christ. Just as God provided a ram for an offering "in the stead of Isaac" (Genesis 22:13-14), so Christ was offered as our substitute. Prayerfully read all the following Scripture references and get the picture of what Christ has done for us.

1. Jesus died for the whole world: John 3:14-16; Galatians 1:14; Titus 2:14; I John 2:2; Hebrews 2:9. God the Father gave His Son—the Son gave Himself.
2. He suffered for our sins: Isaiah, chapter 53. Note in verse 10 and in Matthew 26:38 that His soul was offered for sin. His whole being suffered: body, soul and spirit (see I Thessalonians 5:23).
3. The just offered for the unjust: I Peter 2:24.
4. Because God loved us who were sinners: Romans 5:6-8; Revelation 1:5.
5. His blood made atonement for our sin. The Hebrew word for "atonement" is "covering." Type in Old Testament: Exodus 29:33; Leviticus chapter 1-7 (note 1:4; 4:20, 26, 35; 5:10, 16, 18); Leviticus chapter 16 (note verse 33); Leviticus 17:11, fulfillment in New Testament: Hebrews 9:7-28.
6. Redeemed by His blood: Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 5:9. Redeemed means

to be delivered, bought, as a slave out of the market, by paying a price. That price was the precious blood of Jesus: I Peter 1:18-19.

7. Remission (forgiveness) of sins through His blood: Matthew 26:26-29.
8. We are reconciled through His Blood: Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 1:20-21. Reconcile means "to change thoroughly from." In reconciliation, man is changed from enmity to peace with God.
9. Christ is the propitiation for our sins: Romans 3:25; I John 4:10. Propitiation means "that which appeases, or satisfies completely." In His sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God, making it possible for Him to show mercy to us. Sin is not excused, but paid for by Christ's blood. Believers are made righteous because Christ is righteous (II Corinthians 5:17).

IV. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

It is essential to believe in the literal resurrection of the body of Jesus.

1. The resurrection of Christ was prophesied: Isaiah 53:10 (Note "prolong his days"); Isaiah 26:19; Psalm 16:9-10. Fulfilled: Acts 2:23-32. It was a sign: Matthew 12:38-40; 26:61; 27:40; John 18-22; Matthew 28:6 (Note "as he said").
2. The Bible records fourteen appearances of Christ after His resurrection.
 - a. To Mary Magdalene—John 20:14.
 - b. To the other women—Matthew 28:9.
 - c. To Peter—I Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34.
 - d. To the two disciples on their way to Emmaus—Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-32.
 - e. The day He appeared to the disciples, in the absence of Thomas—John 20:19-24.
 - f. To the disciples when Thomas was present—John 20:24-29.
 - g. In Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, to Peter, John, Thomas, James, Nathanael, and two others—John 21:1-14.

- h. To the disciples on a mount in Galilee—Matthew 28:16.
 - i. To more than five hundred brethren at once—I Corinthians 15:6.
 - j. To James the apostle—I Corinthians 15:7.
 - k. To all the Apostles assembled together—I Corinthians 15:7.
 - l. To all the apostles at His Ascension—Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-10.
 - m. To Stephen, when he was being stoned to death—Acts 7:56.
 - n. To Paul—I Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3-5; 22:6-10.
3. The resurrection declared Jesus to be the Son of God: Romans 1:4.
 4. Jesus raised Himself from the dead: John 10:18; Revelation 1:5, 18. No one else ever did this. Nothing but the power of God can raise the dead, so Jesus Christ is God.
 5. Importance of His resurrection: I Corinthians 15:12-19.
 6. Christ's resurrection guarantees our resurrection: I Corinthians 15:20-23; John 11:25, 26; 14:19.

SOME QUESTIONS THE CRITICS CANNOT ANSWER

1. If Jesus' body did not rise from the dead, what became of it? See Matthew 28:11-15. The elders knew that the body of Jesus had disappeared, and they bribed the watchers to lie about it. Let the critics produce the body of Jesus, or a record of a reliable witness, if they would disprove His bodily resurrection. The only witnesses were bribed to tell a lie.

2. The disciples did not believe Jesus would rise from the dead (Mark 16:14). Why would they suddenly begin to preach it and turn the world upside down? They had to be convinced of it. This became the secret of their power.

3. If the disciples were not convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, why would they be willing to suffer and die for Him? All the original eleven died a martyr's death for Christ, except John, who was persecuted and miraculously escaped. Who would have died for an impostor, or for one who

had disappeared and did not do what he said he would do?

4. And why would millions more Christians suffer and die for Him, even those who had not personally seen Him? There is no way to account for it except the power of God as manifested in the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ, along with these other essential teachings of Him, are imbedded in the very souls of those of us who believe, and we are blessed: John 17:20; John 20:29-31; II Corinthians 5:7

V. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is an essential teaching, along with His virgin birth, and Deity. His blood atonement and resurrection. It was part of God's plan for His Son to be rejected and suffer, to die for us and rise again, then come again to complete His work of redemption; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53:1-12; Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 16:21, 27; Hebrews 9:28.

1. His Personal Return is Certain

Acts 1:9-11. Note "this same Jesus. . . in like manner." He will be visible in His body just as they saw Him go. Beware of teachers who say Christ's return is figurative, or that the Bible means His spiritual presence, or that He comes at our death, etc.

Matthew 24:23-37. Beware of false prophets who claim to be Christ (Matthew 24:5, 11). Beware of false cults who say Jesus has already come, and that only their followers have the understanding to recognize Him. The Bible says every eye shall see Him (Revelation 1:7).

2. The Second Coming of Christ is in Two Steps:

(1) **He comes for His People:** John 14:1-4; I Thessalonians 4:13-18. This is sometimes called the Rapture (to seize and carry away). At that time, Jesus does not come all the way to the earth, but descends in the clouds and brings His people up to meet Him. At that time, the dead in Christ will rise and the living saints will be changed and we will go up to meet our Lord in the air: I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; I Corinthians 15:51-54; Philippians 3:20, 21.

(2) He Will Come With His People to the Earth: Zechariah 14:4-5; Jude 14, 15. Note “all the saints with thee.” II Thessalonians 2:1-12.

3. Christ Will Reign on Earth for 1,000 Years: Revelation 20:4

This is fulfillment of God’s covenant with David: II Samuel 7:8-17; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-36; 15:13-17.

Jesus has not yet reigned on David’s throne, which was in Jerusalem. Therefore, He must come again to fulfill this promise. Note that Gentiles will also be under this reign, as well as the Jews. Christ will reign over the whole earth, with Jerusalem as the capital.

After the thousand-year reign, sometimes called the Millennial Kingdom, there will be a new Heaven and earth: II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation chapter 21-22.

This is what will be accomplished in the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ: I Corinthians 15:20-28.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is first mentioned in the second verse in the Bible, and is referred to hundreds of other times throughout the Old and New Testaments. Yet many Christians know very little of what the Bible teaches concerning the Holy Spirit. In this study, we will consider some of the basic Bible facts about the third Person of the Trinity. He is:

1. A PERSONAL BEING

The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence or power at work in the world. He is a divine Person, “an inner distinction in the Godhead.”

However, some people have a difficult time accepting this fact. In the first place the Holy Spirit seems impersonal when compared to the Father and the Son. His works seem secret or mystical, so much is said about His influence, power and gifts.

Second, the designations sometimes given Him seem impersonal. For example, He is called a *wind, breath, fire, power, oil, water*, etc.

Third, He is not usually associated with the Father and the Son in the greetings and salutations of the New Testament epistles.

Another reason some people question the personality of the Spirit centers around the fact that the Greek word translated “spirit” is neuter in gender and is sometimes translated “it” (see Romans 8:16, 26).

It is not easy to define “personality” when used of the divine Being. God cannot be measured by human standards. God was not made in the image of man, but man in the image of God. Mullins said, “A divine person is not less than a human person, but more.” Only God has a perfect personality. And, although our finite minds cannot fully comprehend many things about the Lord, we can see that the Scriptures clearly present the Holy Spirit as a personal being.

Dr. R. A. Torrey stressed the importance of discovering the personality of the Spirit when he said: “If the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person and we know it not, we are robbing a Divine Being of the love and adoration due Him. Is the Holy Spirit a power that we, in our ignorance and weakness, can somehow get hold of and use? Or is the Holy Spirit a personal Being. . . Who is to get hold of us and use us? Many can testify of the blessing that came into their lives when they came to know the Holy Spirit, not merely as a gracious influence. . . but as an ever-present, loving friend and helper.”

Let’s consider some scriptural proof that the Holy Spirit is a personal Being.

Names and Pronouns

The Holy Spirit is given a name that implies personality—“the Comforter.” The Greek word translated “comforter” means “one who is called to your side (to help)” as when a client calls a lawyer. In John 14:16 the disciples were told that the Holy Spirit would take the place of a person, Christ Himself, and would personally guide them just as Jesus had been doing. Only a person could take the place of a person; certainly no mere influence could take the place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal pronouns are used to refer to the Holy Spirit. In John 16:7-8, 13-15, the Greek masculine pronoun (translated “He”) is used twelve times

speaking of the Spirit. This is especially interesting since the Greek word for spirit (pneuma) is neuter. Yet, contrary to ordinary usage, the Lord refers to the Spirit with a masculine pronoun. This gives us a plain, definite statement concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Identification

The Holy Spirit is identified as equal with the Father and the Son in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and in Paul's benediction (II Corinthians 13:14). These verses show that the Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is a Person.

Characteristics

Reference is made to His knowing (I Corinthians 2:9-11), to His will (12-11) and to His mind (Romans 8:27).

Actions

He testifies. He teaches. He reproves. He comforts. He guides. He strives. He helps. Words like these can only be used of a personal being.

Treatment

The Bible tells us He can be grieved, insulted, lied to, sinned against and blasphemed against. Can these things be done to a mere influence or power?

"When we rely on organization, we get what organization can do. When we rely on education, we get what education can do. When we rely on eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we get what God can do."

A. C. Dixon

II. THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God. He is just as much a member of the Godhead as are the Father and the Son. We will consider five ways this fact is proved in the Bible.

Divine Names

When rebuking Ananias, Peter said: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3). Then, in the following verse, he said: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The Spirit is called "Lord" in II Corinthians 3:18.

Divine Attributes

He has all of the attributes of the Father and the Son. For example, He is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and has the power to give life.

Divine Works

He had a part in creation, in the salvation of souls and in Christ's resurrection.

Divine Association

He is equal to the Father and the Son, and mentioned with them.

Divine Identification

Some Old Testament scriptures which speak of the Spirit refer to Him as God when quoted in the New Testament. Compare Isaiah 6:8-10 with Acts 28:25-27, for example.

MAN

(Creation, Sin, Salvation)

In Genesis, chapter one, God establishes time and prepares the universe for what God considers His crown of creation: man. (Tragically, man has blurred the image of which he was created, and has come to behave so disgracefully that he often appears more like the *cull* than the crown.

"Adam" is not actually a proper name, like Cain and Abel, but is the Hebrew word which is translated "man" in English. It refers to all mankind, male and female. The root meaning of the word is red earth, probably referring to the fact that man was born of the dust of the ground.

Genesis 1:27 states the fact of man's creation. Chapter two describes the method of the creation and the first condition of Adam. J. Sidlow Baxter points out four movements in this chapter:

(1) THE ACT OF *PRODUCTION* (v. 7). Man is formed of "the dust of the ground," yet he is in breathed of God with "the breath of life." Behold his littleness and his loftiness!—his earthliness and heavenliness!

(2) THE DIVINE *PROVISION* FOR MAN (vs. 8-14). Perfect and abundant provisions!

(3) MAN PLACED UNDER *PROBATION* (vs. 15-17). Man's liberty was to be conditioned by loyalty. Amid many provisions there was just one prohibition, which constituted the point of probation.

(4) *PROGRESSION* FOR MAN (vs. 18-25). Point by point there is forward movement, seen in the relation between man and the animals; in the calling forth of the latent faculty of speech; and supremely in the provision of Eve for that deeper need of Adam, and in that perfect first marriage-bliss of Eden.

Thus there is *production* in the likeness of God; *provision* for the body; *probation* for the mind and *progression* to the point of heart-satisfaction. In these four movements we see the MAN, the SERVANT, the KING, the HUSBAND.

New Testament Churches

The word "church" is from two Greek words meaning "to call out from." This word is used more than 100 times in the New Testament. It is used in a secular sense in Acts 19:39; of Israel in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) and of the assembly of believers in Christ (Matthew 16:18; 18:17; I Cor. 1:2; and others). This term shows us that the church is a "called out assembly of believers." For this age, the term "churches" is more appropriate than the term "church"—since the only church on earth now is the local church.

Hebrews 12:23 speaks of a church that *will* be completed at the rapture. Perhaps this is the church mentioned in Matthew 16:18. When Christ said, "I will build My church" this is the durative or linear which means, "I will be building and be building and be building My church." He will continue building until the last person is saved. Then, and not until then, will all believers become a church, a new and great "called out assembly."

Nearly 80% of Scriptural references to the church refer to a local assembly—people meeting

at a specific geographical location. What is a local church? The following definition is given by Joseph M. Stowell:

"A local New Testament church may be defined as a body of born-again, properly baptized believers, with Scriptural officers which are pastors and deacons, organized to meet for worship, to preach the Gospel, to win souls, to carry out the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; to teach the Word of God; to guide, watch over and discipline its members for their good and for the glory of God."

Christian Living

How to Succeed in the Christian Life

by R.A. Torrey

Chapter 1

Beginning Right

There is nothing more important in the Christian life than beginning right. If we begin right we can go on right. If we begin wrong the whole life that follows is likely to be wrong.

If anyone who reads these pages has begun wrong, it's very simple to begin over again, and to begin right.

The right beginning in the Christian life is described in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." The right way to begin the Christian life is by receiving Jesus Christ. To anyone who receives Him, He at once gives power to become a child of God.

Even if the wickedest man on earth should at this moment receive Jesus Christ, he would instantly become a child of God. God makes this plain in the verse quoted above.

No one can become a child of God any other way. No one, no matter how carefully he has been raised or how well he has been sheltered from the

vices and evils of this world, is a child of God until he receives Jesus Christ. We are “children of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). There is no other way.

What does it mean to receive Jesus Christ? It means to take Christ to be all God offers Him to be to everybody.

Jesus Christ is God’s gift. “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). Some accept this wondrous gift of God, and become a child of God.

But the person who refuses this gift of God will perish. He is condemned already. “He that believeth on Him (the Son) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

What does God offer His Son to be to us?

1. Jesus our Sinbearer. We have all sinned. There is not a man or woman, a boy or girl, who has not sinned (Romans 3:22, 23). If any of us say we have not sinned we are deceiving ourselves and lying to God (1 John 1:8, 10).

Now each of us must bear our own sin or someone else must bear it in our place. To bear our own sins would mean we must be banished forever from the presence of God, for God is holy. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5).

But God Himself has provided another to bear our sins in our place so we wouldn’t need to bear them ourselves. This sinbearer is God’s own Son, Jesus Christ. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). When Jesus Christ died upon the cross of Calvary, He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse in our stead (Galatians 3:13).

To receive Christ then is to believe this testimony of God about His Son, to believe Jesus Christ did bear our sins in His own body on the cross (I Peter 2:24), and to trust God to forgive all our sins because Jesus Christ has borne them in our place.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Our own good works, past, present, or future have nothing to do with the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins

are forgiven, not because of any good works we do, but because of the atoning work of Christ on the cross of Calvary in our place.

If we rest in this atoning work we shall do good works. But they will be the outcome of our being saved and of believing on Christ as our sinbearer. Our good works will not be the ground of our salvation, but the result.

We are not forgiven because of Christ’s death and our good works. We are forgiven solely and entirely because of Christ’s death. To see this clearly is the right beginning of the true Christian life.

2. Jesus, our Deliverer from the power of sin.

Jesus not only died, He rose again. Today He is a living Savior. He has all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He has the power to keep the weakest sinner from falling (Jude 24). “Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

To receive Jesus is to believe God’s Word concerning Him, to believe He did rise from the dead, to believe He does now live, to believe He has the power to keep us from falling, to believe He has the power to keep us from the power of sin day by day, and just trust Him to do it.

This is the secret of daily victory over sin. If we try to fight sin in our own strength, we are bound to fail. If we just look up to the risen Christ to keep us every day and every hour, He will keep us.

Through the crucified Christ we get deliverance from the guilt of sin. But it is through the risen Christ that we get daily victory over the power of sin.

Some receive Christ as a sinbearer and thus find pardon, but do not get beyond that. And their life is one of daily failure. Others receive Him as their risen Savior also, and thus enter into an experience of victory over sin.

To begin right we must take Him not only as our sinbearer, but also as our risen Savior, our deliverer from the power of sin, our keeper. Then we find daily victory over sin.

3. Jesus Our Lord and King. We read in Acts 2:36, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” “Lord” means divine Master. And “Christ” means anointed King.

To receive Jesus is to take Him as our divine Master, the One to whom we yield the absolute confidence of our intellects, the One whose Word we believe absolutely, the One we will believe even if the world's wisest men question or deny the truth of His teachings.

And since He is our King, we will gladly yield, to Him the absolute control of our lives. The question from this time on is never going to be what would I like to do or what do others tell me to do, or what do others do; but the whole question is *what would my King Jesus have me do?* A right beginning involves an unconditional surrender to the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus.

The failure to realize Jesus is Lord and King, as well as Savior, has led many to a false start in the Christian life. We begin with Him as our Savior, our sinbearer, and our deliverer from the power of sin. We must not end with Him merely as Savior, we must know Him as Lord and King.

There is nothing more important in a right beginning of Christian life than an unconditional surrender, both of our thoughts and our conduct, to Jesus. Say from your heart and say it again and again, "All for Jesus."

Many fail because they shrink back from this entire surrender. They wish to serve Jesus with half their heart, with part of themselves and part of their possessions. To hold back anything from Jesus means a wretched life of stumbling and failure.

The life of entire surrender is a joyous life all along the way. If you have never done it before, go alone with God today, get down on your knees, and say, "All for Jesus." And mean it. Say it very earnestly, from the bottom of your heart.

Stay there until you realize what it means and what you are doing. It is a wondrous step forward when one really takes it. If you have taken it already, take it again; take it often. It always has fresh meaning and brings fresh blessedness.

In this absolute surrender is found the key to the truth. Doubts rapidly disappear for one who surrenders all (John 7:17). In this absolute surrender you'll find the secret of power in prayer (I John 3:22). In this absolute surrender you'll find the supreme condition of being controlled by the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32).

Taking Christ as your Lord and King involves obedience to His will as far as you know it in each detail of life. There are those who tell us they have taken Christ as their Lord and King who at the same time are disobeying Him daily in business, in domestic life, in social life and in personal conduct. These people are deceiving themselves. You have not taken Jesus as your Lord and King if you are not striving to obey Him in everything each day. He Himself says, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

To sum it all up, the right way to begin the Christian life is to accept Jesus Christ as your sinbearer and to trust God to forgive your sins because Jesus Christ died in your place. Accept Him as your risen Savior who lives to make intercession for you, and trust Him to keep you from day to day. And accept Him as your Lord and King to whom you surrender absolute control of your thoughts and of your life.

This is the right beginning, the only right beginning of the Christian life. If you have made this beginning, all that follows will be comparatively easy. If you have not made this beginning, make it now.

Chapter 2

The Open Confession of Christ

Having begun the Christian life right by taking the proper attitude toward Christ in a private transaction between Himself and yourself, your next step is an open confession of this new relationship between you and Jesus Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 10:32, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." He demands a public confession.

He demands it for your own sake. This is the path of blessing. Many attempt to be disciples of Jesus and not let the world know it. No one has ever succeeded in that attempt. To be a secret disciple means to be no disciple at all. If one really has received Christ he cannot keep it to himself. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34).

So important is the public confession of Christ that Paul puts it first in his statement of the conditions of salvation. He says, "If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead,

thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9, 10). The life of confession is the life of full salvation. When we confess Christ before men on earth, He confesses us before the Father in heaven and the Father gives us the Holy Spirit as the seal of our salvation.

It is not enough just to confess Christ when we unite with the church, or when we come forward in a revival meeting. We should confess Christ constantly. We should not be ashamed of our Lord and King. We should let people know we are on His side. In our home, in our church, at our work, at our play, we should let others know where we stand.

Of course, we should not parade our Christianity or our piety. But we should leave no one in doubt whether we belong to Christ. We should show that we glory in Him as our Lord and King.

The failure to confess Christ is one of the most frequent causes of backsliding. Christians get into new relationships where they are not known as Christians and where they are tempted to conceal the fact. They yield to the temptation and soon find themselves drifting.

The more you make of Jesus Christ, the more He will make of you. It will save you from many temptations if the fact is clearly known that you are one who acknowledges Christ as Lord in all things.

Chapter 3

Assurance of Salvation

To have the fullest measure of joy and power in Christian service, you must know your sins are forgiven, and that you are a child of God. It is the believer’s privilege to know he has eternal life. John says in I John 5:13, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.” John wrote this first epistle for the express purpose that anyone who believes on the name of the Son of God will know he has eternal life.

Some claim that no one can know he has eternal life until he is dead and stands before the judgment seat of God. But God Himself tells us we may know. To deny the possibility of the believer’s knowing

he has eternal life is to say that the first epistle of John was written in vain, and it is to insult the Holy Spirit who is its real author. Again Paul tells us in Acts 13:39, “By Him (that is by Christ) all that believe are justified from all things.” So everyone who believes in Jesus can know that he is justified from all things. He knows it because the Word of God says so.

Again John tells us in John 1:12, “But as many as received Him (Jesus Christ), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Here is a definite and unmistakable declaration that everyone who receives Jesus becomes a child of God. So, every believer in Jesus may know he is a child of God. He may know it on the surest of all grounds. The Word of God says so.

What the Scriptures say is absolutely true. What the Scriptures say, God says. Now in John 3:36 the Scriptures say, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” If we have this faith in Christ, we have God’s own written testimony that we have eternal life, our sins are forgiven, and we are the children of God.

We may feel forgiven, or we may not feel forgiven, but that does not matter. It is not a question of what we feel but of what God says. God’s Word is always to be believed. Our own feelings should often be doubted. Many are led to doubt they are saved, because they do not feel saved. Because you do not feel it is no reason for you to doubt it.

Suppose you were sentenced to prison and your friends secured a pardon for you. The legal document announcing your pardon would be brought to you. You would read it and know you were pardoned because the legal document said so. But the news would be so good and so sudden that you would be dazed by it. You don’t realize you’re pardoned. Someone could come to you and say, “Are you pardoned?” What would you reply? You might say, “Yes, I am pardoned.” Then he might ask, “Do you feel pardoned?” You may reply, “No, I do not feel pardoned. It is so sudden, it is so wonderful, I cannot comprehend it.” Then he would say to you, “But how can you know that you are pardoned if you do not feel it?” You would hold out the document and say, “This says so.” The time would come, after you read the document over and over again and believed

it, when you would not only know you were pardoned, but you would feel it.

Now the Bible is God's authoritative document declaring that everyone who believes in Jesus is a child of God. If anyone asks you if your sins are all forgiven, reply, "Yes, I know they are because God says so." If anyone asks you if you know you are a child of God, reply, "Yes, I know I am a child of God because God says so." If they ask you if you have everlasting life, reply, "Yes, I know I have everlasting life because God says so."

You may not feel it yet but, if you keep meditating on God's statement and believe what God says, the time will come when you will feel it.

For one who believes on the Son of God doubts he has eternal life, he makes God a liar. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:10-12). Anyone who does not believe God's testimony that He has given us eternal life, His Son, and that he who has the Son has the life makes God a liar.

It is sometimes said, "It is presumptuous for anyone to say he knows he is saved." But is it presumptuous to believe God? When you believe on the Son of God and yet doubt that you have eternal life, you make God a liar.

When Jesus said to the woman who was a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48), was it presumptuous for her to go out and say, "I know my sins are forgiven"? Would it not have been presumptuous for her to have doubted for a moment that her sins were all forgiven? Jesus said they were forgiven.

Is it then any more presumptuous for the believer to say, "My sins are all forgiven, I have eternal life," when God says in His written testimony to everyone who believes, "You are justified from all things" (Acts 13:39), "You have eternal life" (John 3:36; I John 5:13)?

Be very sure first of all that you really do believe on the name of the Son of God, that you really have received Jesus. If you are sure of this, then never doubt for a moment that your sins are all forgiven. Never doubt for a moment that you are a child

of God. Never doubt for a moment that you have everlasting life. If Satan comes and whispers, "Your sins are not forgiven," point Satan to the Word of God and say, "God says my sins are forgiven and I know they are." If Satan whispers, "Well, perhaps you don't believe on Him," then say, "Well if I never did before I will now." And then go out rejoicing, knowing your sins are forgiven, knowing you are a child of God, knowing you have everlasting life.

The reason many don't have the assurance they are saved is they are not saved. They don't need assurance. What they need first is salvation.

But if you have received Jesus in the way described in the first chapter, *you are saved*, you are a child of God, your sins are forgiven. Believe it. Know it. Rejoice in it.

Having settled the question, let it remain settled. Never doubt it. You may make mistakes. You may stumble. You may fall. But even if you do, if you have really received Jesus, you know that your sins are forgiven. You can rise from your fall and go forward in the glad assurance that there is nothing between you and God.

Chapter 4

Filled with the Holy Spirit

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the great secret of joyfulness in our own hearts, victory over sin, power in prayer, and effective service.

Everyone who has truly received Jesus must have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him (Romans 8:9 b). But in many believers, though the Holy Spirit dwells within, He dwells way back in some hidden sanctuary of their being, not a part of their consciousness. It is something quite different, something far better than this, to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

When one is filled with the Spirit he is conscious of the great joy that only God can give. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit He rules our lives and produces within us an ever increasing measure the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we are conscious of His drawing our hearts out in prayer in a way that is not of ourselves. We are conscious of His help when we witness for Christ, when we speak

to others individually and try to lead them to accept Christ, or when we teach a Sunday school class, speak in public, or do any other work for the Master.

Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? If you have not, this is how you may.

1. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, you must acknowledge the death of Christ on the cross for us as the only and all-sufficient ground upon which God pardons all our sins and forgives us.

2. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must put away every known sin. We must go to our heavenly Father and ask Him to search us through and through bringing to light anything in our outward life or inward life that is wrong in His sight. And if He does bring anything to mind that is displeasing to Him, we must put it away, no matter how dear it is to us.

3. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, there must be an open confession of Christ before the world.

4. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, there must be absolute surrender of our lives to God. You must go to Him and say, "Heavenly Father, here I am. You have bought me with a price. I am Your property. I renounce all claim to do my own will, all claim to govern my own life, all claim to have my own way. I give myself up unreservedly to You—all I am and all I have. Send me where You want, use me as You like, do with me what You want—I am Yours."

If we hold anything back from God, no matter how small it may seem, that spoils everything. But if we surrender all to God, then God will give all He has to us.

Some shrink from this absolute surrender to God, but absolute surrender to God is simply absolute surrender to infinite love. Surrender to the Father whose love is not only wiser than any earthly father's, but more tender than any earthly mother's.

5. To be filled with the Holy Spirit there should be definite asking for the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus says in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Just ask God to give you the Holy Spirit and expect Him to do it. He says He will.

6. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, there must be faith, simply taking God at His Word. No matter how positive any promise of God's Word may be, we enjoy it personally only when we believe. Our

Lord Jesus says, "What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11 :24).

When you pray for the Holy Spirit, you have prayed for something according to God's will. Therefore, you know that your prayer is heard and that you have what you asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15).

You may feel no different. But don't look at your feelings but at God's promise. Believe the prayer is heard, believe God has given you the Holy Spirit, and you will then have an actual experience what you have received in simple faith on the bare promise of God's Word.

It is good to go often alone, kneel down, look to the Holy Spirit and put into His hands anew the entire control of your life. Ask Him to take control of your thoughts, imaginations, affections, desires, ambitions, choices, purposes, words, and actions, the control of everything. And expect Him to do it.

The whole secret of victory in the Christian life is letting the Holy Spirit, who dwells within you, have undisputed right of way in the entire conduct of your life.

Chapter 5

Looking Unto Jesus

If we are to run with patience the race that is set before us, we must always keep looking to Jesus. (Hebrews 12:1-3) . One of the simplest, yet mightiest, secrets of abiding joy and victory is to *never lose sight of Jesus*.

1. We must keep looking at Jesus as the reason for our acceptance before God. Over and over again Satan will attempt to discourage us by bringing up our sins and failures and try to convince us that we not saved. If he succeeds in getting us to keep looking at and brooding over our sins, he will soon have us discouraged; and discouragement means failure. But if we keep looking at what God sees—the death of Jesus Christ in our place—we will never be discouraged because of the greatness of our sins. Though our sins are very great, they have all been erased. Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of sin by being made a curse in our place (Galatians 3:13).

While in ourselves we are full of unrighteousness, in Christ we are made the righteousness of God, because Christ was made to be sin in our place (II Corinthians 5:21). Every sin Satan taunts us about has been borne and settled forever. (I Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6).

Jesus paid my debt,
All the debt I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

If you are this moment troubled about any sin you have ever committed, in the past or the present, just look to Jesus on the cross. Believe what God tells you about Him, that this sin which troubles you was laid upon Him (Isaiah 53:6). Thank God the sin is all settled; be full of gratitude to Jesus who bore it in your place and do not worry about your sins anymore. It is base ingratitude to God to brood over sins that He in His infinite love has cancelled. Keep looking at Christ on the cross and always walk in the sunlight of God's favor. This favor has been purchased for you at a great cost. Gratitude demands us to always believe in Jesus' gift and walk in the light of it.

2. We must keep looking at Jesus as our risen Savior, who has all power in heaven and on earth and is able to keep us every day and every hour. Are you tempted to do some wrong at this moment? If you are, remember that Jesus rose from the dead. Remember that at this moment He is living at the right hand of God in glory. Remember He has all power in heaven and on earth, and He can give you victory right now.

Believe He has power to give you victory over this sin that now besets you. Ask Him to give you victory; expect Him to do it.

Through looking to Christ's sacrifice, we obtain pardon and enjoy peace. By looking to the risen Christ, we obtain present victory over the power of sin.

If you have lost sight of the risen Christ and have yielded to temptation, confess your sin and know that it is forgiven because God says so (I John 1:9). Look to Jesus, the risen One, again to give you victory now.

3. We must keep looking to Jesus as the One whom we should follow in our daily conduct. Our Lord Jesus says to us, His disciples today, as He said to His early disciples, "Follow Me" (Matthew 9:9). The whole secret of true Christian conduct can be summed up in these two words: "Follow Me." "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" (I John 2:6) .

One of the most common causes of failure in Christian life is found in trying to follow a good man whom we greatly admire. No man or woman, no matter how good, can be safely followed. If we follow any man or woman, we are bound to go astray. There has only been one absolutely perfect Man on this earth—the Man Christ Jesus. If we try to follow any other man, we are more sure to imitate his faults than his virtues. Look to Jesus and only Jesus as your guide.

If you are ever perplexed as to what to do, simply ask, "What would Jesus do?" Ask God through His Holy Spirit to show you what Jesus would do. Study your Bible to find out what Jesus did do and follow His example.

Even though no one else seems to be following Jesus, be sure you follow Him. Do not spend your time or thought criticizing others because they do not follow Jesus. See that you follow Him. When you are wasting your time criticizing others for not following Jesus, Jesus is always saying to you, "What is that to thee; follow thou Me" (John 21:22).

This is the life of a disciple. The life of simply following Jesus. Many perplexing questions will come to you, but the answers become as clear as day if you determine with all your heart to follow Jesus in everything.

Satan will always be ready to whisper to you, "Such and such a good man does it." But all you need to do is answer, "It does not matter to me what this or that man does." The only question should be, "What would Jesus do?"

There is wonderful freedom in this life of simply following Jesus. This path is straight and clear. But the path of the one who tries to shape his conduct by observing the conduct of others is full of twists, turns, and pitfalls.

Keep looking at Jesus. Follow on with trust wherever He leads. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the

perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). He is the light of the world. Anyone who follows Him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life all along the way (John 8:12).

Chapter 6

Church Membership

No Christian can have real success in the Christian life without the fellowship of other believers. The Church is a divine institution, built by Jesus Christ Himself. It is the one institution that endures. Other institutions come and go. They do their work for their day and disappear. But the Church will continue to the end. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

The Church is made up of imperfect men and women, consequently, it is an imperfect institution.

Nonetheless it is of divine origin, and God loves it. Every believer should realize that he belongs to it, openly take his place bearing his responsibilities in it.

On the day of Pentecost the three thousand who were converted were baptized at once and were added to the Church (Acts 2:42). And “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” If you have really received Jesus Christ, as soon as possible find a group of people who have also received Him and unite yourself with them.

Which church should you join? Well, by all means, don’t waste your time looking for a perfect church. If you wait until you find a perfect church before you unite with any, you will unite with none. And thus you will belong to a church with yourself as the only member; and that is the most imperfect church of all. I would rather belong to the most faulty Christian body of believers I ever knew than not belong to any church group at all.

The local churches in Paul’s day were very imperfect. Read the epistles to the Corinthians and see how imperfect the church in Corinth was. But even with all the evil in it, Paul never dreamed of advising any believer in Corinth to get out of this imperfect church. He did tell them to come out of heathenism and to come out from fellowship with infidels (II Corinthians 6:14-18). But he never ad-

vised coming out of the imperfect church in Corinth. He did tell the Corinthian church to separate from membership certain persons whose lives were wrong (I Corinthians 5:11) . But he did not tell the individual members of the church to get out of the church because these persons had not yet been separated from their fellowship.

Since you cannot find a perfect church, find the best church possible. Unite with a church where they believe in the Bible and where they preach the Bible. Avoid the churches where words are spoken to undermine your faith in the Bible as a reliable revelation from God Himself. The Bible is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Unite with a church where there is a spirit of prayer, where the prayer meetings are well attended. Unite with a church that has an active interest in the salvation of the lost, where young Christians are looked after and helped, where minister and people have a love for the poor and the destitute. A church that regards its mission in this world to be the same as the mission of Christ, “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

As to denominational differences, other things being equal, unite with that denomination whose ideas of doctrine, government, and ordinances are most closely related to your own. It is better to join a living church of another denomination than to unite with a dead church of your own.

If you cannot find a church that agrees with the pattern set forth above, find a church that comes nearest to it. Go into that church and by prayer and work try to bring that church, as nearly as you can, to be what a church of Christ should be. Do not waste your strength in criticism against either the church or minister. Focus on what is good in the church and in the minister, and do your best to strengthen it.

Keep a firm but unobtrusive distance from what is wrong while seeking to correct it. Do not be discouraged if you cannot correct problems in a day, a week, a month, or a year. Patient love, prayer, and effort will show in time. Withdrawing by yourself, complaining, and grumbling will do no good. Grumbling will simply make you and the truths for which you stand repulsive.

Chapter 7

Bible Study

Nothing is more important for the spiritual development than regular, systematic Bible study. In the spiritual life, as in the physical life, health depends on what we eat and how much we eat (Matthew 4:4). The soul's proper food is found in one book, the Bible.

Of course, a true minister of the gospel will feed us on the Word of God, but that is not enough. He feeds us only one or two days in the week, and we need to be fed every day. Furthermore, it won't do to depend on being fed by others. We must learn to feed ourselves.

We live in a day in which false doctrine is everywhere. And the only Christian who is safe from being led into error is the one who studies the Bible for himself daily.

Paul wrote to the pastor of the church in Ephesus, "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13). But he goes on to tell Timothy how he and his fellow believers could remain safe even in the times of increasing peril. That way was through the study of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:14, 15).

"All Scripture," he adds, "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" (II Timothy 3:16). Through the study of the Bible, one will be sound in doctrine and led to see his sins and to put them away. He will find discipline in the righteous life and be equipped for all good works.

Our spiritual health, our growth, our strength, our victory over sin, our soundness in doctrine, our joy and peace in Christ, our cleansing from inward and outward sin, our fitness for service, all depend on daily study of the Bible. The one who neglects his Bible is bound to be a failure in the Christian life. The one who studies his Bible in the right spirit and by a constant method is destined to succeed in his Christian life.

"What is the right way to study the Bible?"

1. Study it daily (Acts 17:11). No matter how good your methods of Bible study, no matter how much time you spend studying the Bible now and then, for best results you must make it a matter of principle never to let a single day go by without earnest Bible study.

I would not dare allow even one day to pass without listening to God's voice as He speaks through the pages of His Book. Mr. Moody once wisely said, "In prayer we talk to God. In Bible study, God talks to us, and we had better let God do most of the talking."

A regular time should be set aside each day for Bible study. I don't think it is wise, as a rule, to say that we will study so many chapters a day, because that leads to undue haste and thoughtlessness. It's best to set apart a certain length of time each day for Bible study. Some can give more time than others. But no one should devote less than fifteen minutes a day. You might set your time this low so you won't be discouraged in the beginning. If a young Christian planned to spend an hour or two a day in Bible study, there is a strong probability he would not keep the resolution and might become discouraged. Yet I know many very busy people who have given the first hour of every day for years for Bible study. Some have even given two hours a day.

It's important to choose the right time for this study. In most cases the best time is immediately after waking up in the morning. The worst time is the last thing at night. Though it's good to give a little while just before we retire to Bible reading, (so God's voice will be the last voice we listen to) the bulk of our Bible study should be done when our minds are clearest and strongest. Whatever time is set apart for Bible study should be kept sacredly for that purpose.

2. Study the Bible systematically. Much time is frittered away in random study of the Bible. The same amount of time put into systematic study would yield far greater results. Have a definite place where you study and have a definite plan of study.

A good way for a young Christian to begin the study of the Bible is to read the gospel of John. When you have read it through once, read it again and again, until you have gone over the gospel five times. Then read the gospel of Luke five times in the same

way. And do the same with Acts, I Thessalonians, I John, Romans, and Ephesians.

By this time you will be ready to take up a more thorough method of Bible study.

a. A good method is to begin at Genesis and read the Bible through chapter by chapter. Read each chapter through several times and then answer the following questions on each chapter:

- 1) What is the main subject of the chapter? State the principal contents of the chapter in a single phrase or sentence.
- 2) What truth is most clearly taught and most emphasized in the chapter?
- 3) What is the best lesson?
- 4) What is the best verse?
- 5) Who are the principal people mentioned?
- 6) What does the chapter teach about Jesus Christ?

Go through the entire Bible in this way.

b. Another and more thorough method of Bible chapter study, which cannot be applied to every chapter in the Bible, but will yield excellent results when applied to some of the more important chapters of the Bible, is:

- 1) Read the chapter for today's study five times, reading it out loud at least once. Each new reading will bring out a new point.
- 2) Divide the chapter into its natural divisions, and find headings that describe the contents of each division.

For example, suppose the chapter studied is I John 5. You might divide it this way: verses 1-3, the believer's noble parentage; verses 4-5, the believer's glorious victory; verses 6-10, the believer's sure ground of faith; verse 11-12, the believer's priceless possession; verse 13, the believer's blessed assurance; verses 14-15, the believer's unquestioning confidence; verses 16-17, the believer's great power and responsibility; verses 18-19, the believer's perfect security; verse 20, the believer's precious knowledge; verse 21, the believer's constant duty.

- 3) Write down the most important facts of the chapter in their proper order.
- 4) Make a note of people mentioned in the chapter and any light thrown on their character.
- 5) Note the principal lessons of the chapter. It is helpful to classify these. For instance, les-

sons about God, lessons about Christ, lessons about the Holy Spirit.

- 6) Find the key verse of the chapter if there is one. Mark it and memorize it.
- 7) Write down a new truth you have learned from the chapter.
- 8) Write down a truth you already know that has come to you with new power.
- 9) Write down a definite thing you have resolved to do as a result of studying this chapter.

A good sequence of chapters this method would be: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans 1-8; I Corinthians 12, 13, and 15; II Corinthians 1-6; Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and I John. Sometimes you can refresh your study by alternating methods.

c. Another profitable method of Bible study is the topical method. This was D. L. Moody's favorite. Take up the great topics the Bible teaches, such as: the Holy Spirit, prayer, the blood of Christ, sin, judgment, grace, justification, the new birth, sanctification, faith, repentance, the character of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, the second coming of Christ, assurance, love of God, love (to God, to Christ, to Christians, to all men), heaven, hell. Get a Bible concordance and study each one of these topics.

3. Study the Bible comprehensively. Many who read their Bibles make the great mistake of confining all their reading to certain portions of the Bible they most enjoy. They get no knowledge of the Bible as a whole, and miss many of the most important phases of Bible truth.

Begin and go through the Bible again and again—a certain portion each day from the Old Testament and a portion from the New Testament. Read carefully at least one Psalm every day.

It is also beneficial to read a whole book of the Bible through at a single sitting. This lets you see the whole picture. Of course, a few books of the Bible would take one or two hours; but most books can be read in a few minutes. The shorter books of the Bible should be read through again and again at a single sitting.

4. Study the Bible attentively. Do not hurry. One of the worst faults in Bible study is haste. The Bible's only influence is the truth it contains. It has

no magic power. It is better to read one verse attentively than to read a dozen chapters thoughtlessly.

Sometimes you will read a verse that grabs you. Don't hurry on. Stop and think about that verse. As you read, mark in your Bible what impresses you most. You don't need an elaborate marking system, simply highlight what impresses you.

Meditate on what you mark. God pronounces that man blessed who meditates on God's law day and night (Psalm 1:2). It's wonderful how a verse of Scripture will open if you read it over and over again, paying attention to each word, trying to get its exact and full meaning.

Memorize the passages that impress you most (Psalm 119:11). And when you do, memorize its location as well as the words. Fix in your mind chapter and verse where the words are found.

A busy but spiritually-minded man who was hurrying to catch a train once said to me, "Tell me in a word how to study my Bible." I replied, "Thoughtfully."

5. Study your Bible comparatively. Compare Scripture with Scripture. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. Wherever you find a difficult passage in the Bible, there is always another passage that explains its meaning.

The best book to use in this comparison of scripture with scripture is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. This book gives a large number of references on every verse in the Bible.

6. Study your Bible believingly. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Christians in Thessalonica, said, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13). Happy is the one who receives the Word of God as these believers in Thessalonica received it, as the Word of God. In such a one it works effectually.

The Bible is a unique book. It is what no other book is, the Word of God. This can be easily proven to any impartial man. The Bible should be studied as no other book is. To study it as the Word of God involves five things.

a. A greater eagerness and more careful study should be given to the Bible than is given to all other

books. It is important to know the mind of man. It is absolutely essential to know the mind of God. The place to discover the mind of God is the Bible.

b. The teachings of the Bible should be promptly accepted and submitted to without question. These teachings may appear unreasonable or impossible to us. But we should accept them.

Since this book is the Word of God, it is foolish to criticize its teachings with our finite reasoning. A little boy who discredits his wise father's statements simply because to his infant mind they appear unreasonable is not thinking wisely but foolishly. Even the greatest of human thinkers is only an infant compared with God. To discredit God's statements found in His Word because they appear unreasonable to our infantile minds is not to be a philosopher, but a fool. When we realize that the Bible is the Word of God, its clear teachings must be the end of all controversy and discussion for us.

c. The one who studies the Bible as the Word of God will say of any promise, no matter how vast and beyond belief it appears, "God who cannot lie has promised this, so I will claim it for myself." I know of no better way to grow rich spiritually than to search daily for promises. And when you find them, take them for yourself.

d. "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own soul" (James 1:22). Nothing will better help you to understand the Bible than resolving to obey it. Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17).

Many passages that look obscure to you now would become as clear as day if you were willing to obey everything the Bible teaches. It is remarkable how soon one loses his thirst for the Bible and how soon the mind becomes obscured to its teachings when we disobey the Bible at any point.

I have known many people who loved their Bibles, were useful in God's service, and had clear views of the truth, who have come to something in the Bible they were unwilling to obey. Some sacrifice was demanded which they were unwilling to make. As a result, their love for the Bible rapidly waned, their faith in the Bible weakened, and soon they drifted farther and farther away from clear views of the truth.

Nothing clears the mind like obedience; nothing darkens the mind like disobedience. To obey a truth

you see prepares you to see other truths. To disobey a truth you see darkens your mind to all truths.

Cultivate prompt, exact, unquestioning, joyous obedience to every command that clearly applies to you. Be on the lookout for new orders from your King. Blessing lies in the direction of obedience to them. God's commands are guideposts that mark the road to present success and to eternal glory.

e. Studying the Bible as the Word of God involves studying it as His own voice speaking directly to you. When you open the Bible to study, realize you have come into the very presence of God. Instead of a mere mechanical performance of duty, Bible study will become a wonderfully joyous privilege if you say as you open the Bible, "Now, God my Father is going to speak to me."

Often it helps us to realize the presence of God to reading the Bible on our knees. The Bible became in some measure a new book to me when I started reading it on my knees.

7. Study the Bible prayerfully. God, the author of the Bible, is willing to act as interpreter of it. He does so when you ask Him. The one who prays the psalmist's prayer with sincerity and faith, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18), will have his eyes opened to new beauties and wonders in the Word of God that he never dreamed of before.

Be very definite about this. Each time you open the Bible for study, even if just for a few minutes, ask God to give you an open and discerning eye. Expect Him to do it.

Every time you come to a difficult passage in the Bible, lay it before God, ask for an explanation, and expect it. How often we think as we puzzle over hard passages, "Oh, if I only had some great Bible teacher here to explain this to me!" God is always present. He understands the Bible better than any human teacher. Take your difficulty to Him and ask Him to explain it. Jesus said, "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). It is the privilege of the humblest believer in Christ to have the Holy Spirit for his guide in his study of the Word.

I have known many very humble people, people with almost no education, who got more out of their Bible study than many great theological teachers. This happened because they learned it was their

privilege to have the Holy Spirit for their Bible study teacher. Commentaries on the Bible are usually valuable. But you will learn more from the Bible by having the Holy Spirit for your teacher than you will from all the commentaries.

8. Use spare moments for Bible study. Time is lost in almost every man's life while waiting for meals, riding planes, going from place to place, and so forth. Carry a pocket Bible with you and use these golden moments to listen to the voice of God.

9. Store the Scripture in your mind and heart. It will keep you from sin (see Psalm 119:11) and false doctrine, (See Acts 20:29, 30, 32; and II Timothy 3:13-15.), fill your heart with joy (Jeremiah 15:16) and peace (Psalm 85:8), give you victory over the evil one (see 1 John 2:14), and power in prayer (John 15:7), make you wiser than the aged and your enemies (Psalm 119:98,100,130) and make you "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17). Try it.

Chapter 8 Difficulties in the Bible

Sooner or later every young Christian comes across passages in the Bible which are hard to understand and difficult to believe. These difficulties become a serious hindrance in the development of many young Christian lives. We have no desire to conceal the fact these difficulties exist. We want to frankly face and consider them.

1. Difficulties are to be expected. Some people are surprised to find difficulties in the Bible. I would be more surprised if there were not. What is the Bible? It's a revelation of the mind, will, character, and being of the infinitely great, perfectly wise, and absolutely holy God. But to whom is this revelation made? To people like you and me, to finite beings, imperfect in intellectual development and consequently in knowledge, character, and spiritual discernment.

When the finite tries to understand the infinite there is bound to be difficulty. When the ignorant contemplate the speech of one perfect in knowledge, many things will be hard to understand. Some things will also appear absurd to immature and inaccurate minds. When sinful beings listen to an absolutely

holy being they are bound to be staggered at some of His demands. His dealings will appear too severe, stern, and harsh.

If someone were to hand me a book as simple as the multiplication table and say, "This is the Word of God, in which He has revealed His whole will and wisdom," I would shake my head and say, "I cannot believe it. That is too easy to be a perfect revelation of infinite wisdom." In a revelation of God's mind, will, character, and being, these will be things hard for a beginner to understand. Even the wisest and best of us are only beginners.

2. A difficulty or objection we may have with a doctrine doesn't prove it to be untrue. Many people think it does. If they come across something they can't understand or is hard for them to believe, they immediately conclude the doctrine is disproved. That's very illogical. Stop a moment and think. Learn to be reasonable and fair.

Nearly all science discoveries were once difficult for most people to accept. Scientists couldn't believe Venus had phases, until a more powerful telescope was made so they could be seen. The whole problem arose, as all those in the Bible do, from man's ignorance of some of the facts.

He is a shallow thinker who gives up a well-attested truth because of some facts he cannot understand. It is a very shallow Bible scholar who gives up the divine origin and inerrancy of the Bible because some facts are not clear to him yet.

3. There are many more and much greater difficulties in believing the Bible to be of human origin, than are in holding the Bible to be of divine origin. A man may bring you some apparent error and say, "How do you explain this if the Bible is the Word of God?" Perhaps you may not be able to answer him satisfactorily. Then he thinks he has you, but he doesn't. Ask him "How do you account for the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, if it is of human origin? How do you account for the marvelous unity of the Bible? How do you account for its inexhaustible depth? How do you account for its unique power in lifting men up to God? How do you account for its victory over all men's attacks?"

The discrepancies that confront one who denies the Bible is God's perfect word are far more numerous and weighty than those that confront one who believes it is of divine origin and authority.

4. Because you cannot solve a difficulty does not prove it can't be solved. It's strange how often we overlook this very evident fact. When some people meet a problem in the Bible and give it a little thought and can see no possible solution, they conclude that a solution is impossible by anyone. They should have said "Though I see no possible solution to this difficulty, someone a little wiser than I might easily find one." Oh! If we'd only remember we don't know everything. And a great many things we cannot solve now, we could easily solve if we only knew a little more.

What would we think of a beginner in algebra who, having tried without success for half an hour to solve a hard problem, declared there was no possible solution to the problem because he could not find one?

5. The textual defects in the Bible are insignificant when put in comparison with its many truths and beauties. Why do men spend so much time focusing on the insignificant points they consider defects in the Bible, and pass by absolutely unnoticed and incomparable beauties and wonders that adorn and glorify almost every page? What would we think of any man who, in studying some great masterpiece of art, concentrated his entire attention on what looked to him like a flyspeck in the corner? Much "critical study of the Bible" is actually a laborious and scholarly investigation of supposed specks, and an entire neglect of the countless glories of the book.

6. The difficulties in the Bible have far more weight with superficial readers of it than with profound students. A man who is totally ignorant of the real contents and meaning of the Bible, and devotes his whole strength to discovering apparent inconsistencies in it, will think these difficulties are extremely important. But to the one who has learned to meditate on the Word of God day and night, they have little weight.

George Mueller, who carefully studied the Bible from beginning to end more than a hundred times, was not disturbed by any discrepancies he encountered. But to one who is reading it through for the first or second time, many things perplex and stagger.

7. Difficulties in the Bible rapidly disappear with careful and prayerful study. So many things in the Bible that once puzzled us have been per-

fectly cleared up. Is it not reasonable to suppose the difficulties that still remain will also disappear after further study?

How shall we deal with the difficulties we do find in the Bible?

Honestly. When you find a difficulty in the Bible, frankly acknowledge it. Until you can give a good honest explanation, don't try to give any at all.

Humbly. Recognize the limitations of your own mind and knowledge. Don't imagine there is no solution just because you've found none.

Determinedly. Make up your mind you will find the solution if you can by any amount of study and hard thinking.

Fearlessly. Don't be afraid when you find a difficulty, no matter how unanswerable it appears. Thousands have found such before you. They were seen hundreds of years ago and still the Bible stands. You aren't likely to discover any difficulty that wasn't discovered and probably settled long before you were born. The Bible has stood centuries of rigid examination and intense assault, and is not going under by any discoveries you make. All modern attacks on the Bible simply revamp old objections disposed of a hundred times in the past. These old objections will prove no more effective in their new clothes than they did in the castoff garments of the past.

Patiently. Do not be discouraged because you do not solve every problem in a day. If some difficulty defies your best effort, lay it aside for awhile. Very likely when you come back to it, it will have disappeared and you'll wonder how you were ever perplexed by it. I often smile when I think how sorely I was perplexed in the past over questions which are now clear as day.

Scripturally. Nothing explains Scripture like Scripture. Never let apparently obscure passages of Scripture darken the light that comes from clear passages. Rather let the light that comes from the clear passage illuminate the darkness that seems to surround the obscure passage.

Prayerfully. It is wonderful how difficulties dissolve when we look at them on our knees. One reason some modern scholars learned to be destructive critics is because they forgot how to pray.

Chapter 9 Prayer

Most of the failure in Christian living, and in Christian work, results from neglect of prayer.

Very few Christians spend as much time in prayer as they should. The apostle James told believers in his day that the poverty and powerlessness of their lives and service was resulted from a neglect of prayer. "Ye have not, because ye ask not". So it is today. Why, many Christians are asking, do I make such poor headway in my Christian life? Why do I have so little victory over sin? Why do I accomplish so little by my effort?" God answers, "Ye have not because ye ask not."

Set apart some time each day for prayer. The habit of David and Daniel is a good one, three times a day. "Evening, and morning, and at noon," says David, "will I pray, and cry aloud and He shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17). Of Daniel we read, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

Of course, you can pray while walking down the street, riding in the car, or sitting at your desk. And you should learn to lift your heart to God even in the busiest moments of life. But we also need set times of prayer, times when we go alone with God shut the door and talk to our Father in the secret place (Matthew 6:6).

Prayer is a wonderful privilege. It is an audience with the King. How strange that some people should ask, "How much time should I spend in prayer?" When a subject is summoned to an audience with his king, he never asks, "How much time must I spend with the king?" His question is, "How much time will the king give me?" Any true child of God, who realizes that prayer is an audience with the King of Kings, will never ask, "How much time must I spend in prayer?" Instead, he will ask, "How much time may I spend in prayer in relation to other duties and privileges?"

Begin the day with thanksgiving for the definite mercies of the past and prayer for the definite needs of the present day. Ask God to show you the

temptations you are likely to meet and get from God strength for victory over these temptations before they come. Many fail in the battle simply because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason others succeed is because they have gained victory on their knees long before the battle arrived. Jesus conquered the awful battles of Pilate's judgment hall and the cross because He prayed the previous night. He anticipated the battle the night before and gained the victory through prayer.

He told His disciples to do the same when He said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Luke 22:40). But they had slept when they should have prayed. And when the hour of temptation came, they fell.

Anticipate your battles, fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory. At the very start of the day, secure counsel and strength from God Himself for the duties of the day.

Never let the rush of business crowd out prayer. The more work a day requires, the more time must be spent in prayer and preparation for that work. And it may surprise you to find that prayer is the greatest time-saver known to man.

Stop in the middle of the bustle and temptation of the day for thanksgiving and prayer. A few minutes spent alone with God at noon will go far to keep you calm despite the worries and anxieties of modern life.

Close the day with thanksgiving and prayer. Review all the blessings of the day and thank God in detail for them. Nothing further increases faith in God and His Word than a calm review at the close of each day of what God has done for you that day. Nothing goes further toward bringing new and larger blessings from God than intelligent thanksgiving for blessings already granted.

The last thing you do each day should be to ask God to show you anything in the day that has been displeasing to Him. Then wait quietly before God and give God an opportunity to speak to you. Listen. Do not be in a hurry. If God shows you anything that has been displeasing in His sight, confess it fully and frankly as to a holy and loving Father. Believe God forgives it all, because He says He does (I John 1:9).

Thus at the close of each day all your accounts with God will be settled. You can sleep in the joyful awareness that there is not a cloud between you and God. You can rise the next day to begin life anew with a clean balance sheet. Do this and you can never backslide. Indeed, you will not backslide at all. It is very hard to straighten out accounts in business that have been allowed to become disordered over a prolonged period. No bank ever closes its business day until its balance sheet is absolutely correct. No Christian should close a single day until his accounts with God for that day have been perfectly adjusted.

There should be special prayer in special temptation—when we see the temptation approaching. If you possibly can, immediately find a place to be alone with God and fight your battle out. Keep looking to God. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

It is not necessary to always be on your knees all the time but the heart should be on its knees all the time. We should often be on our knees or on our faces literally. This prayer life is a joyous life, free from worry and care. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

There are three things for which one who desires to succeed in the Christian life must especially pray. Wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, (and we all do) let him ask of God" (James 1:5). Strength. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). The Holy Spirit. "Your heavenly Father (shall) give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke 11:13).

We need a new filling with the Spirit for every new emergency of Christian life and Christian service. The apostle Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4); but he was filled anew in Acts 4:8 and Acts 4:31. We constantly need to obtain new supplies of oil for our lamps. We secure these new supplies of oil by asking for them.

It is not enough that we have our times of secret prayer alone with God. We also need fellowship with others in prayer. If there is a prayer meeting in your church, attend it regularly. Attend it for your own sake and for the sake of the church. If it is a prayer

meeting only in name and not in fact, use your influence quietly and constantly (not obtrusively) to make it a real prayer meeting. Attend the prayer meeting regularly for that purpose. Refuse all social engagements for that night.

A major-general in the United States Army once took command of the forces in a new district. A reception was arranged for him on a certain night of the week. When he was informed of this public reception, he replied that he could not attend since it was the evening of his prayer meeting. Everything had to take second place on that night to his prayer meeting. That general proved he was a man that could be depended upon.

Ministers learn to depend on their prayer meeting members. The prayer meeting is the most important meeting in the church. If your church has no prayer meeting, use your influence to start one. It does not take many members to make a good prayer meeting. You can start with two but aim for many members.

It is wise to have a few Christian friends with whom you meet every week simply for prayer. Nothing has been more important in the spiritual development of my own life than a little prayer meeting of less than a dozen friends who have met every Saturday night for years. We met and together we waited on God. If my life has been of any use to the Master, I attribute it largely to that prayer meeting. Happy is the young Christian who has a little band of friends who regularly meet together for prayer.

Chapter 10 Working for Christ

One of the important conditions of growth and strength in the Christian life is work. No man can keep up his physical strength without exercise. And no man can keep up his spiritual strength without spiritual exercise—without working for the Master.

The working Christian is a happy Christian. The working Christian is a strong Christian. Some Christians never backslide because they are too busy with their Master's business. Many professed Christians do backslide because they are too idle to do anything but backslide.

Jesus said to the first disciples, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Anyone who is not a fisher of men is not following Christ. Bearing fruit by bringing others to the Savior is the purpose for which Jesus has chosen us. And it's also one of the most important conditions for power in prayer. Jesus says in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, *that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.*" These words of Jesus are very plain. A person who is bearing fruit can pray in the name of Christ and receive what he asks in that name.

In the same chapter Jesus tells us that bearing fruit for him is the condition of a joy-filled life. He says, "These things have I spoken unto you (that is, things about living in Him and bearing fruit in His strength), that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). Experience proves that those who are full of activity in winning others to Christ are also full of joy in Christ Himself.

If you wish to be a happy Christian, a strong Christian, one who is mighty in prayer, begin now to work for Jesus. Never let a day pass without doing some definite work for Him.

But how can a young Christian work for Christ? How can a young Christian bear fruit? The answer is very simple and very easy to follow. You can bear fruit for your Master by going to others and telling them what your Savior has done for you, by urging them to accept this same Savior, and by showing them how. No other work in the world is so simple to do, so joyous, and so abundant in its fruitfulness, as personal hand-to-hand work.

The youngest Christian can do personal work. Of course, he cannot do it as well as he will after he has had more practice. The way to learn how to witness is by doing it. I've known thousands of Christians all around the world who have begun to work in bringing others to Christ on the same day they were converted.

When we were in Sheffield, a young man working in a warehouse accepted Christ. Before the month was over he had led thirty others to Christ, many of them in the same warehouse where he worked.

Many books tell how to do personal work. But you don't need to wait until you've read some book on the subject before you begin. One of the most common and greatest mistakes made today is that of frittering one's life away in getting ready to get ready to get ready. Some never do get ready. The way to get ready is to begin at once.

Make up your mind you will speak about accepting Christ to at least one person everyday. Early in his Christian life D. L. Moody made a resolution. One night he was returning home late from his work. As he neared home, it occurred to him that he had not spoken to anyone about Jesus that day. He said to himself, "It is too late now. I will not get an opportunity. Here will be one day gone without my speaking to anyone about Christ." Then, just ahead of him, he saw a man standing under a lamppost. He said, "Here is my last opportunity." The man was a stranger, though he knew of Mr. Moody.

Mr. Moody hurried up to him and asked, "Are you a Christian?" The man replied, "That is none of your business. If you were not a preacher, I would knock you into the gutter." Mr. Moody spoke a few Christian words to him and passed on.

The next day this man angrily called on one of Mr. Moody's business friends in Chicago. He said, "That man Moody of yours is doing more harm than good. He has zeal without knowledge. He came up to me last night, a perfect stranger, and asked me if I was a Christian. He insulted me. I told him if he had not been a preacher I would have knocked him into the gutter."

Mr. Moody's friend called him in and said, "Moody, you are doing more harm than good. You have zeal without knowledge. You insulted a friend of mine on the street last night." Mr. Moody left somewhat crestfallen, feeling perhaps he was doing more harm than good, perhaps he did have zeal without knowledge.

Some weeks after, however, late at night, there was a loud pounding on his door. Mr. Moody got out of bed and went to the door. That same man stood at the door. He said, "Mr. Moody, I have not had a night's rest since you spoke to me that night under the lamppost. I have come here for you to tell me how to be saved." Mr. Moody had the joy that night of leading that man to Christ.

It is better to have zeal without knowledge than to have knowledge without zeal. But it is better yet to have zeal with knowledge, and anyone may have this. The way to acquire knowledge is through experience, and the way to gain experience is by doing the work.

The man who is so afraid of making blunders that he never does anything never learns anything. The man who goes ahead and does his best, willing to risk the blunders, is the man who learns to avoid blunders in the future.

Some of the most gifted men I have ever known have never really accomplished anything because they were so afraid of making blunders. Some of the most useful men I have ever known were men who started out as the least promising, but who had a real love for souls and worked to win them in a blundering way. Eventually they learned by experience to do things well.

Do not be discouraged by your mistakes. Pitch in and keep plugging away. Every honest mistake is a stepping stone to future success. Try every day to lead someone to Christ. Of course, you will not always succeed, but the work will still do you good.

Years later, you will often find that, where you thought you made the greatest mistakes, you accomplished the best results. The man who becomes angriest at you will often finally be the man who is most grateful to you. Be patient and hope on. Never be discouraged.

Make a prayer list. Pray alone with God. Write down at the top of a sheet of paper, "God helping me, I promise to pray daily and to work persistently for the conversion of the following people." Then kneel down and ask God to show you who to put on that list.

Don't make the list so long that your prayer and work become mechanical and superficial.

After you have made the list, keep your covenant and really pray for them daily. Watch for opportunities to speak to them—improve these opportunities. You may have to wait a long time for your opportunities with some of them, and you may have to speak often. But never give up.

I prayed about fifteen years for one man, one of the most discouraging cases. But I finally saw that man converted, and I saw him become a preacher of the gospel. Many others were later converted through his preaching.

Learn to use tracts. Get a few good tracts that meet the needs of different kinds of people. Hand those tracts out to people. And follow them with prayer and personal effort.

Go to your pastor and ask him if there is some work he would like to have you do for him in the church. Be a person on whom your pastor can depend. We live in a day in which there are many kinds of work going on outside the church. Many of these ministries are good, and you should take part in them as much as you can. Never forget, however, that your first duty is to the church where you are a member.

Be a person your pastor can count on. It may be that your pastor may not want to use you, but at least give him the chance of refusing you. If he does refuse you, don't be discouraged, but find work somewhere else. There is plenty to do and few to do it. It is as true today as it was in the days of our Savior. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38) and pray that He will send you.

The right kind of men are needed in the ministry. The right kind of men and women are also needed for foreign mission work. You may not be the right kind of a man or woman for foreign missionary work, but there is still work for you which is just as important as the work of the minister or the missionary. Be sure you fill your place and fit it well.

Chapter 11 Foreign Missions

Every Christian who truly pleases God must be involved in foreign missions. The last command of our Lord before leaving this earth was, "*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 always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Here is a command and a promise. It is one of the sweetest promises in the Bible. But the enjoyment of the promise is conditioned upon your obedience to the command.

Our Lord commands every one of His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. This command was not given to the apostles alone, but to every member of Christ's Church in all ages.

If we go, then Christ will be with us even until the end of the age. If we do not go, we have no right to count on His companionship. Are you going with the Gospel? There are three ways in which we can go, and in at least two of these ways we must go if we are to enjoy the wonderful privilege of His constant personal companionship and fellowship.

1. Many can go personally. Many of us should go. God does not call each of us to go as foreign missionaries, but He does call many of us to go who are not responding. No Christian has a right to stay home until he has offered himself definitely to God for the foreign field. If you have not already done it, do it today. Spend time alone with God and say, "Heavenly Father, here I am, Your property, purchased by the precious blood of Jesus. I belong to You. If You want me in the foreign field, make it clear to me and I will go." Then keep watching for God's leading.

God's leading is a clear leading. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). If you are really willing to be led, He will make His will for you clear as day. Until He does, you need not worry that perhaps you are staying at home when you should go to the foreign field. If He wants you to go, He will make it clear in His own way and time; then you're to prepare to go step by step as He leads you. And when His hour comes, go, no matter what it costs. If He does not make it clear that you should go, stay home and do your duty at home and go to the foreign fields in these other ways.

2. All can and ought to go by gifts. There are many who would like to go personally whom God providentially prevents, who are still going in the missionaries they support or help to support. It's possible for you to preach the gospel in the most remote corners of the earth by supporting or helping to support a foreign missionary or a native worker. Many who read this are able to support a foreign missionary financially. If you are able to do so, do it.

Oh! The joy of preaching the gospel in lands we will never see with our own eyes. And yet so few Christian church members today realize their privi-

lege of preaching the gospel and saving men, women, and children in distant lands by sending substitute missionaries to them. Foreign missionaries could not go without your gifts; and you could not go if they did not go in your place. You may be able to give only a small amount to foreign missions, but every bit counts. Many insignificant streams together make a mighty river.

Learn to give liberally, and you will a happy Christian. "The liberal soul shall be made fat" (Proverbs 11:25). "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully," and "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Corinthians 9:6, 8, 9). *The stingy Christian cannot be a growing Christian.* It is wonderful how a Christian begins to grow when he begins to give. Power in prayer depends on liberal giving. One of the most wonderful statements about prayer and its answers is I John 3:22. John says, he received whatever he asked of God, because he kept God's commandments about giving. He tells us in the twenty-first verse that when our heart cannot condemn us in the matter of giving, then we have confidence in our prayers to God. God's answers to our prayers come in through the same door our gifts go out to others. Some of us open the door such a little bit by our small giving that God is not able to pass in to us any large answers to prayer.

Of course, we should not confine our giving to foreign missions. We should give to the work of the home church. We should do good for all men as we have opportunity, especially to those who are fellow Christians (Galatians 6:10). But foreign missions should certainly have a large part of our regular giving.

3. We can all go to the foreign fields by our prayers. Any hour of the day or night you can reach any corner of the earth by your prayers. I go to Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, India, Africa, and to other parts of the world every day by my prayers. If you are ready to go yourself, God willing, and if you are actually going by your gifts as God gives you ability, then you can go effectually by your prayers also.

The greatest need in the work of Jesus Christ today is prayer. Foreign mission would be so much

more successful if Christians at home, as well as abroad, were living up to their full potential in prayer.

Be definite in your prayers for foreign missions. Pray first of all that God will send forth laborers into His harvest, the right laborers. More foreign missionaries are greatly needed, but only more of the right kind of missionaries, those who He calls to the task.

Pray for the laborers who are already in the field. No group of men and women need our prayers more than foreign missionaries. Satan delights in attacking the reputation and character of the brave men and women who are at the battlefront for Christ and the truth. No one is subjected to so many subtle and awful temptations as foreign missionaries. We owe it to them to support them with our prayers. Do not merely pray for foreign missionaries in general. Have a few missionaries whose work you study so that you can pray intelligently and specifically for them.

And pray for the native converts. We Christians at home think we have difficulties, trials, temptations, and persecutions, but the burdens we have are nothing to what the converts in heathen lands bear. Christ alone can give them strength to stand, but He works in answer to the prayers of His people. Pray often, pray earnestly, pray intensely, and pray believingly for native converts. Have some definite field about whose needs you keep yourself informed, and pray for the converts in that area. Do not have so many that you become confused and mechanical. Pray for revivals in specific places. The last few years have been years of special prayer for special revival in foreign fields. The great things that God is beginning to do are small in comparison with what He will do with much prayer!

Chapter 12 Companions

Our companions have a great deal to do with determining our character. The companionships we form create an intellectual, moral, and spiritual atmosphere where we are constantly breathing. And our spiritual health is helped or hindered by this atmosphere.

Every young Christian should have a few wisely chosen, intimate friends with whom he can talk

freely. Be sure they are spiritual persons who love to study the Bible, who love to talk about spiritual things, who know how to pray and do pray, and who are really working to bring others to Christ.

Don't be upset because you'd rather be with some Christian people more than others. God has made us that way. Some are attracted to certain people and some to others. It proves nothing against the others or against yourself that you are not attracted to them as you are to certain people. Cultivate the friendship with those you find helpful to your own spiritual life.

On the other hand, avoid companionships you find spiritually and morally hurtful. Of course, we are not to withdraw ourselves totally from unconverted people or even worldly people. Our acquaintance with these people is necessary that we may win them for Christ. But we must always be on our guard to concentrate on lifting them up, or they will be sure to drag us down. If in spite of your best effort any friendship is harming your spiritual life, then give it up. Some people are surrounded with such an atmosphere of unbelief, cynicism, criticism, impurity, greed, or other evils that it is impossible to associate with them without being contaminated.

But there are other companionships that mold our lives besides those of living persons. The books we read are our companions. They exert a tremendous influence for good or evil. Nothing will help us more than a good book, and nothing will hurt us more than a bad book.

Among the most helpful books are the biographies of good men. Read again and again about the lives of such great men as Wesley, Finney, and Moody.

Well-written histories are good companions. History is not only instructive but spiritually helpful if we will see the hand of God in it. Notice the inevitable triumph of right, and the inevitable punishment of wrong, in individuals and nations.

Some books of fiction are helpful, but here one needs to really be on guard. Most modern fiction is wicked and very morally harmful. Even novels that are not absolutely bad, often promote false views of life. Much reading of fiction is mentally injurious. The habitual novel reader ruins his powers of keen and clear thinking. Fiction is so fascinating that it always tends to drive out other reading that is more helpful mentally and morally.

We should be on our guard even when reading good literature, that the good does not crowd out the best, that is, the best of man's literature does not replace the very best of all—God's Word. God's Book, the Bible, must always have the first place.

Then there is another kind of companionship that has a tremendous influence over our lives—the companionship of pictures. The pictures we see every day of our lives, and the pictures we see only occasionally, have a tremendous power in shaping our lives.

How many pictures, even masterpieces of art, have evoked an evil suggestion. The evil thought they suggest may only be for a moment, yet Satan knows how to bring that picture back again and again to bring harm. Do not look at any picture no matter how praised by the critics, that taints your imagination with evil. Feast your soul on pictures that make you holier, kinder, more sympathetic, and more tender.

Chapter 13

Recreation

Young people need recreation. Our Savior does not frown on wholesome recreation. He was interested in the games of children when He was here on earth. He watched the children at play. He also watches the children play today, and delights when it is wholesome and elevating. In the stress and strain of modern life older people also need recreation if they are to do their best work. Some recreations are wholesome, and some are wicked. It is not impossible or necessary to take up amusements one by one. A few principles are all we need.

1.) When in doubt, always give God the benefit of the doubt. There's plenty of recreation which is not questionable. If you're not sure it's RIGHT, don't do it!

2.) Ask yourself: "Can I do this not to the glory of God?"

3.) Don't do anything that will hurt your influence with anyone. Lost people are watching you.

4.) Don't take part in any recreational activity which you can't make a matter of prayer. Pray before you play, and ask God to bless what you're about to do!

5.) Don't go to any activity where you feel Christ will not feel at home with you. Would it make you ashamed if you knew the Lord Jesus was right beside you? If so, you're in the wrong place.

6.) Only do those things you wouldn't mind being found enjoying when Jesus returns. He will be back at any moment. Would you like to meet Him doing that?

7.) Don't do anything that would harm others, even if it wouldn't hurt you.

Bodily exercise profiteth little, but at least it does PROFIT. Since our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we should exercise it in a wholesome way.

The Lord intends for Christians to have fun. And He also intends for us to DO RIGHT!

Chapter 14

Persecution

God tells us in His Word that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3 :12). Sooner or later everyone who truly seeks to follow Jesus Christ will find this verse is true in his life. We live in a God-hating world and a compromising age.

The world's hatred of God today may be veiled. It often does not express itself the same way it expressed itself in Palestine during the days of Jesus Christ. But the world hates God today as much as it ever did. And it hates anyone who is loyal to Christ. It may not imprison or kill him, but in some way it will persecute him.

Persecution is inevitable for a loyal follower of Jesus Christ. Yet often when a young Christian meets persecution he is surprised and discouraged. Many fall away. Many seem to "have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; then, when affliction or persecution ariseth because of the Word, straightway they stumble" (Mark 4:17). But if persecution is received correctly, it will not be a hindrance to the Christian life, but a help to it.

Don't be discouraged when you are persecuted. No matter how fierce and hard it may be, be thankful for it. Jesus says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:10-12) .

It is a great privilege to be persecuted for Christ and for the truth. Peter found this out and wrote to the Christians of his day. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified" (I Peter 4:12-14) .

Be very sure the persecution is really for Christ's sake and not because of your own stubbornness. Many people bring upon themselves the displeasure of others because they are stubborn and cranky; then flatter themselves that they are being persecuted for Christ's sake and for righteousness' sake. Be considerate of the opinions and of the conduct of others. Be sure you do not push your opinions on others in an unwarrantable way or make your conscience a rule of life for other people.

But never yield one inch of principle. Stand firmly behind what you believe to be the truth. Do it in love, but do it at any cost. And if when you are standing for conviction and principle you are disliked, slandered, and treated with all manner of unkindness because of it, do not be sad, but rejoice.

Do not speak evil of those who speak evil of you, "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:21, 23) .

At this point many Christians make a mistake loyally for the truth. They receive the persecution that comes for the truth with harshness. They grow bitter and start condemning everyone but themselves.

There is no blessing in bearing persecution that way. Persecution should be borne lovingly. Do not talk about your own persecution. Rejoice in it. Thank God for it and go on obeying God. And do not forget to love and pray for those people who persecute you (Matthew 5:44).

Chapter 15

Knowing God's Will

If at anytime the persecution seems more than you can bear, remember how great the reward is. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us" (II Timothy 2:12). Everyone must enter into the Kingdom of God through tribulation (Acts 14:22).

But remember, however fiercely the fire of persecution may burn, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Remember, too, that your light affliction is but for a moment, and that it worketh out for you "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17). Keep looking, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternity (II Corinthians 4:18.)

When the apostles were persecuted, even suffering imprisonment and whippings, they departed from the presence of the council that had ordered their terrible punishment, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, and they continued daily in the temple and in every house teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:40-42) .

The time may come when you think you are being persecuted more than others, but you do not know what others have to endure. Even if you are being persecuted more than anyone else, you should not complain. Thank God He has given you such an honor. Keep your eyes fixed on "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" (Hebrews 12:2, 3).

I was once talking with an old man who became saved when he was still a slave. His cruel master flogged him again and again for his loyalty to Christ, but he said to me, "I simply thought of my Savior dying on the cross in my place, and I rejoiced to suffer persecution for Him."



I have met a great many who wish to do God's will, but what puzzles them is how to know what the will of God may be in every situation. When anyone starts out with determination to obey God in everything and be led by the Holy Spirit, Satan tries to confuse that person from knowing the will of God.

Satan suggests something is the will of God that is not the will of God at all. Then when the believer does not follow the false suggestion, Satan says, "You disobeyed God." That leaves the young Christians in a very morbid and unhappy state of mind, fearing they have disobeyed God and lost His favor. This frequently used device of the devil keeps many Christians from being cheerful.

How can we know the will of God?

First, let me say that a true Christian life is not governed by a lot of rules about what to eat, drink, do, and not do. A life governed by a lot of rules is a life of bondage. One will sooner or later break some of these man-made rules and feel self-condemnation. Paul tells us in Romans 8:15, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The true Christian life is a life of a trusting, glad, fear-free child; not controlled by rules, but by the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If you have received Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells within you and is ready to lead you at every turn of life.

We trust God and rejoice in His presence just as a child trusts his earthly father and rejoices in his presence. If we make a mistake, even if we disobey God, we go and tell Him all about it as trustfully as a child would. And we know that He forgives us and restores us instantly to His full favor (I John 1:9).

But how can we detect the Holy Spirit's guidance so we may obey Him and have God's favor at every turn of life? This question is answered in James 1:5-7, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that

wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” The principle is simple. It includes five points.

- 1) Recognize your own ignorance and your own inability to guide your own life—you lack wisdom.
- 2) Surrender your will to God and show a real desire to be led by Him.
- 3) Definitely pray to God for guidance.
- 4) Confidently expect that God will guide you. “Ask in faith, nothing doubting.”
- 5) Follow step by step as He guides.

God may only show you a step at a time. That is enough. All you need to know is the next step. Many make a mistake at this point. They want God to show them the whole way before they take the first step.

A university student said to me: “I cannot find the will of God. I have been praying, but God does not show me His will.” This was in July. I said, “About what are you seeking to know in the will of God?” “About what I should do next summer.” I replied, “Do you know what you should do tomorrow?” “Yes.” “Do you know what you should do next autumn?” “Yes, finish my degree. But what I want to know is what I should do when my university course is over.” I showed him that all he needed to know now was what God had already shown him. God would show him the next step when the time came.

Don’t worry about what you ought to do next week. Do what God shows you to do for today. Next week will take care of itself. Indeed, tomorrow will take care of itself. Obey the Spirit of God for today. “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34). It is enough to live a day at a time if we do our very best for that day.

God’s guidance is clear guidance, “God is light and In Him Is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5). Do not be anxious about obscure leadings. Obscure leadings are not divine leadings. God’s path is as clear as day. Satan’s path is full of obscurity, uncertainty, anxiety, and questioning.

If you are not quite sure whether or not it is the will of God, simply pray to your heavenly Father and say, “Heavenly Father, I desire to know Your will. I will do Your will if You will make it clear. But You

are light and in You is no darkness at all. If this is Your will make it crystal clear and I will do it.” Then wait quietly for God and do not act until He makes it clear. But the moment He makes it clear, act at once.

The whole secret of guidance is an absolutely surrendered will that is ready to obey God at any cost. Many of our uncertainties about God’s guidance are simply because we are not really willing to follow God’s guiding. We are tempted to say, “I cannot find out what God’s will is” when the real trouble is we know it’s His will for us to do something we do not wish to do, so we try to make ourselves think God wants us to do something else.

All supposed leadings of God should be tested by the Word of God. The Bible is God’s revealed will. Any leading that contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible is certainly not the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself.

A man once came to me and said that God was leading him to marry a certain woman. He said she was a very devoted Christian woman, and they were greatly drawn to one another. They felt that God was leading them to be married. But I said to the man, “You already have a wife.” “Yes,” he said, “but we have never lived happily, and we have not lived together for years.” “But,” I replied, “that does not alter the situation. God in His Word has told us distinctly the duty of the husband to his wife and how wrong it is in His sight for a husband to divorce his wife and marry another.” “Yes,” said the man, “but the Holy Spirit is leading us to one another.” I replied, “Whatever spirit is leading you to marry one another is certainly not the Holy Spirit but the spirit of the evil one. The Holy Spirit never leads anyone to disobey the Word of God.”

In seeking to know the guidance of the Spirit, always search the Scriptures. Study them prayerfully. Do not make a book of magic out of the Bible. Don’t try to know God’s will by opening your Bible at random, putting your finger on some text and taking it out of its context without any relation to its real meaning. This is an irreverent and improper use of Scripture. You may open your Bible at just the place to find the right guidance. But, if you do receive real guidance, it will not be by some fanciful interpretation of the passage you find. It will be by taking the passage in its context and interpreting it to mean just what it says as seen in its context.

ANGELS

Much difficulty springs from using the Bible in a perverse way. I knew an earnest Christian woman who was concerned about the predictions made by a false prophetess that Chicago was to be destroyed on a certain day. She opened her Bible at random. It opened to the twelfth chapter of Ezekiel, “Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness....And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate” (Ezekiel 12:18, 20). Now this seemed to fit the situation exactly, and the woman was considerably impressed. But if the verses were studied in context, it would have been evident at once that God was not speaking about Chicago. It was not an intelligent study of the Word of God and therefore led to a false conclusion.

To sum up, live a life controlled by the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. Surrender your will totally to God. Whenever you are in doubt concerning His guidance, pray and ask Him to show you His will. Expect Him to do it. Follow step by step as He leads. Test all leadings by the plain and simple teachings of the Bible.

After you have done what you think God led you to do, don't wonder whether you did the right thing. You will become morbid if you do.

If you really wished to do God's will and sought His guidance, and did what you thought He guided you to do, you may rest assured you did the right thing, no matter what the outcome has been.

Satan is determined to keep us from being happy, cheerful Christians. But God wishes us to be happy, every day and every hour. He does not wish us to brood but rejoice (Philippians 4:4).

Let us remember that, if we surrender to Him, God is more willing to guide us than we are to be guided. He can guide us at every step. And even though our actions may not bring the results we expect, let us never brood over it but trust God. Let us walk in the light of simple trust in God. In this way we shall be glad, peaceful, strong, and useful at every turn of life.



They've been called “God's Secret Agents.” They have faithfully served God (and man *for* God) throughout history. Everybody knows about angels; but most people don't know Bible truth concerning angels. In fact, some people classify angels as mythical characters created in the minds of literary dreamers.

THEIR EXISTENCE

Only the Bible speaks with authority concerning this higher order of beings between God and man, superior to man and inferior to God. And with more than 100 Old Testament references and 160 New Testament references, it is quite evident that these supernatural beings play a major role in God's dealings with mankind.

The Lord Jesus certainly believed in the existence of angels, referring to them in Matthew 13:41; 18:10; 26:53; Mark 8:38; 13:32; and in many other passages.

Angels often appeared to people in Old Testament times. For example, two angels in human form appeared to Lot (Gen. 19:1); and an angel shut the mouths of lions to protect Daniel (Daniel 6:22).

Note: “the angel of the Lord” is a term usually, if not always, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as He appeared to individuals in His preincarnate form—before He was born in Bethlehem. (See Genesis 16:8-14; 22:9-18; Exodus 3:1-14).

Angels were often on the scene in the New Testament. After Satan tested our Lord in the wilderness “angels came and ministered unto Him” (Matthew 4:11). Angels also delivered apostles from prison (Acts 5:17-20; 12:5-11).

THEIR NATURE

1. Angels *are created beings*. “Praise ye Him, all His angels. . .for He commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 148:2, 5). See Nehemiah 9:6 and Colossians 1:16.

2. Angels *are spirit beings*. Psalm 104:4 says God “maketh His angels spirits.” And in Hebrews 1:14, they are called “ministering spirits.” Although they are invisible spirits, they have sometimes ap-

peared to men, even in human form. Angels are neither male or female, although the term “angel” in Scripture always carries a masculine form.

3. Angels *are powerful beings*. They “excel in strength” (Psalm 103:20), and are “greater in power and might” than man (II Peter 2:11). One angel was able to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and other wicked cities. One angel smote the first born. One angel rolled away the great stone from the mouth of the tomb. One angel will be able to lay hold of Satan (Rev. 20:2, 10). One angel smote 185,000 Assyrians.

4. Angels *are numerous*. Hebrews 12:22 speaks of “an innumerable company of angels”. . . and Revelation 5:11 proves there are more than 100,000,000 angels.

5. Angels *have various ranks*. Michael is an archangel (Jude 9). Ezekiel saw angels called cherubim; Isaiah saw seraphim above the throne of God. There is definite order and organization, with various ranks among angelic beings.

THEIR CHARACTER

Although all angels were holy when God created them, the Bible teaches that some have sinned and become evil, or fallen, angels. (See II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6). In Matthew 25:41, the Bible refers to “the devil and his angels.” At least part of these fallen angels are free to help Satan carry out his evil work on earth. We commonly call them “demons.” They have no hope, and will eventually be cast into the lake of fire.

The majority of the angels did not sin, and continue to willingly and faithfully serve the Lord. Many of these holy angels will come to earth with Christ (Mark 8:38).

THEIR WORK

1. The angels *worship and adore the Lord*. (Hebrews 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12)

2. The angels *execute God’s will*. They “do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word” (Psalm 103:20-21). Scriptures indicate they deal with natural events of the world, with the affairs of nations, with churches and individual believers.

3. The angels *guide the Christian*. They guide the worker to the sinner (Acts 8:26), and the sinner

to the worker (Acts 10:3). They also guide the believer into positions of strength and safety.

4. They *will accompany Christ to earth when He returns* at the close of the Great Tribulation and will assist in carrying out His judgment (Matthew 13:49; 25:31; II Thess. 1:7-8).

LAST THINGS

The doctrinal study of last things has to do with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and what happens in relation to it. In this unit we will discuss what happens in relation to His return and afterward. We will limit our discussion to three things—the future resurrections through Christ, the future judgments by Christ, and the future reign of Christ.

Future Resurrections

All resurrections will be accomplished through Christ, who is “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). In this connection, the Scriptures assure us that all will be resurrected, tell us when the resurrections will take place, and give us some indication of their nature.

Certainty

The certainty of the resurrections rests on an established fact—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 15:20-22 states: “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Christ’s resurrection is the guarantee of the resurrection of all men, both saved and unsaved. Jesus Christ Himself taught the resurrection of all men when He said, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28,29; see Dan. 12:2; Acts 24:15).

Chronology

The sequence of the resurrections is given in Paul's statement concerning resurrection: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Cor. 15:23, 24).

The resurrection of believers is linked with Christ's coming—first, in the air (the Rapture) before the Tribulation, and next, to the earth before the millenium.

Church saints. God revealed through Paul that the resurrection of believers of this Church Age will take place at the time of the Rapture: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds: to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16, 17). Believers will receive glorified bodies at this time (I Cor. 15:51-54).

Tribulation saints. In the Book of the Revelation we read of a resurrection of believers which will occur just before the millennial reign of Christ. John wrote: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection" (20:4, 5). These will be the Tribulation saints—believers who will be martyred during the Tribulation, when the Antichrist will be in power and will demand worship. The alternative to worshiping him will be death (13:15).

Old Testament saints. Daniel 12 indicates that the resurrection of the Old Testament saints will be after the Tribulation. Daniel referred to the end of the Tribulation when he said that there will be an unprecedented time of trouble and at that time God's people will be delivered (v. 1). Then Daniel went on to say that many will awaken from among those that sleep in the earth, "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (v. 2). He did not distinguish the time element involved between the resurrection of the believers and unbe-

lievers; he simply referred to both resurrections in the same verse. It is clear, however, that both resurrections are placed after the Tribulation. God told Daniel, "Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (v. 13). This seems to be a clear indication that Daniel will not be resurrected until after the Tribulation.

Old Testament saints were promised a kingdom on earth, and their resurrection at the end of the Tribulation makes it possible for them to inherit the kingdom and to be at the marriage feast.

Unbelievers. The last resurrection will be that of unbelievers, and it will take place after the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. It will be for judgment. Concerning this resurrection, it is written: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). In contrast, verse 6 states: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

The Resurrection Body

While much is uncertain as to the nature of the resurrection body, some helpful comparisons are made in I Corinthians 15:42-44: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." In verse 49 we are assured that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Every believer will have a glorified body like that of their risen Lord, Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20,21; I John 3:1, 2).

Future Judgments

The Scriptures speak very clearly of the certainty of judgment—that God is going to judge everyone and that He has placed Jesus Christ as the Judge (Acts 17:30, 31; Heb. 9:27). Jesus said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:22, 23).

Our study of the future judgments is divided chronologically: those taking place after the Rapture and those taking place after the millennium. It

is important to note who is being judged, the basis for judgment, and the outcome of each judgment.

Judgments Following the Rapture

The judgment of *believers' works* following the Rapture is revealed in II Corinthians 5:9, 10: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 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." This is a judgment, not for salvation, but for determining reward of those who have salvation. Salvation rests on the receiving of Jesus Christ as the One who paid the penalty—was judged—for our sins on Calvary (I Peter 2:24; 3:18; see John 5:24; Rom. 8:1).

The results of the judgment of believers' works are either loss or reward. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Cor. 3:14, 15).

Those who will be converted and then martyred during the Tribulation will be rewarded at the revelation of Christ, when He comes to earth at the close of the Tribulation and before the millennium. This fact is revealed in Revelation 20:4: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." These believers will suffer martyrdom at the hands of the Antichrist and, as a reward, they will reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Israel will be judged at the close of the Tribulation. In this judgment, the Lord will rid the earth of those Jews who remain unbelievers, so that only believers will enter His millennial kingdom. God promised through Ezekiel, "I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 20:38; see vv. 33-37).

Only Israelites who have received Christ will enter His millennial kingdom. This is indicated by

God in Zechariah 13:9: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (see Zech. 12:10; 13:6-8; Rom. 11:25-27).

Christ will judge the *Gentile nations* that are left after the Battle of Armageddon. He will divide the people as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46). To those on His right hand, Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v. 34). To those on His left hand, He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41).

The basis of this judgment of the Gentile nations is their treatment of those whom Christ designated as "these my brethren" (v. 40; see v. 45). We believe that this reference is to the believing Jewish remnant, who will proclaim Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:1-8; see Joel 2:32). Only believing Gentiles and believing Jews will enter Christ's millennial kingdom (see Matt. 8:11; 25:46).

Judgments Following the Millennium

Satan will be judged. Bound and cast into the bottomless pit for the duration of the millennium, Satan will afterward be released for a time, during which he will lead his final revolt against God and His people (Rev. 20:1-3, 7, 8). God's judgment will be swift and terrible, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet already will be (v. 10; see 19:20).

There remains the *Great White Throne Judgment*, before which *all unbelievers of all ages will appear* (20:11-13). This follows the resurrection of the unbelieving dead (v. 5). John, the writer of the Book of the Revelation, stated: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (v. 12).

The judgment concerning salvation has been determined by what is in the book of life. Since the names of believers are indelibly inscribed in the

book of life (see Luke 10:20; Rev. 3:5; 21:27), those who stand at this Great White Throne Judgment do not have their names in the book of life. They have not personally accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and are already under condemnation (John 3:18). Consequently, “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15; see John 3:36). The degree of punishment is to be determined by what is written in the books (Rev. 20:12). Punishment will differ in severity, not duration. All punishment will last forever.

The Future Reign of Christ

For ages man has hoped for and dreamed of a golden age of peace, friendship, and mutual concern and respect. Despite all of man’s efforts, there will be no perfect rule on earth until Christ reigns on earth. The Scriptures assure us that He will rule the entire earth.

The Millennium

The *time* of Christ’s reign will follow His return to earth at the end of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29, 30; see Zech. 14:4, 9; Rev. 11:15). Following this, He will set up His thousand year reign on earth (Matt. 25:31-34; Rev. 20:4-6).

The *duration* of Christ’s reign on earth will be 1000 years. From this fact we get the term “millennium,” which means “thousand years.” Although other details concerning the reign of Christ on earth are found elsewhere in the Bible, the length of His reign is disclosed only in Revelation 20. Those who participate in the first resurrection will live and reign with Christ “a thousand year” (v. 6; see vv.3, 7).

The *subjects* in Christ’s millennial kingdom at first will be in two categories: believers in glorified bodies and believers in natural, physical bodies. Those in glorified bodies will be resurrected believers (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 20:4-6). Believers living on earth at the end of the Tribulation—both Jews and Gentiles—will enter the kingdom in their natural bodies (Zech. 13:8, 9; Matt. 25:31-34).

Conditions in the Kingdom Age will be most interesting. The millennium will open so promisingly, with all men knowing Christ as Saviour (Jer. 31:31-34; Matt. 25:34, 46). There will be universal disarmament (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3-5). The curse

will be lifted from creation: “The creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21). This will include the land, for even the desert will be fertile (Isa. 35:1) and the plowman will overtake the reaper (Amos 9:13). The curse will also be lifted from the animals, as prophesied in picturesque language in Isaiah 11:6-9.

Christ’s *government* will be righteous (Isaiah 11:4, 5; 32:1). The Saviour will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). Outbreaking sin will be judged immediately, as Psalm 101:8 prophetically indicates: “I will early [morning by morning] destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.”

There will be *unbelievers*. Many children will be born to believers during the millennium. These children will have sinful natures and will need to be born again through receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour (John 3:3-5). Many will fail to do so, and will give only outward or feigned obedience to Christ. Consequently, when Satan is loosed from his prison in the bottomless pit at the end of the millennium, he will be able to recruit a great army to fight against Christ and His people (Rev. 20:7, 8). This revolt will be halted swiftly and terribly as God sends a consuming fire from heaven (v. 9).

Christ’s Everlasting Reign

After the Great White Throne Judgment (vv. 11-15), Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, having put down all rebellion against His rule (I Cor. 15:24-28). This will be followed by the new heaven and the new earth, with the Father and the Son ruling over the saved of all ages for ever and ever (Rev. 21:1; 22:1-5). A wonderful, glorious future awaits everyone who personally accepts Christ as Saviour.

This material discussing “Last Things” is reprinted from MAJOR BIBLE DOCTRINES, written by A. H. Yetter, published by Back to the Bible.

GOD'S PROGRAM

