

MY RULES FOR LIFE

GEORGE W. DEHOFF

1. I try never to say anything behind a man's back that would give me the least embarrassment to say to his face.

2. I try never to speak back to personal critics—friends do not need to hear the defense and enemies would not believe it.

3. Every day I greet every person I see with a smile and make a special effort to do so if the person is poor or in unfortunate circumstances.

4. The first thing when I awake in the morning I plan what my duty for the day is and try to go beyond it.

5. Every day I read from the Bible and some other good books—feeding the mind and soul is more important than feeding the body.

6. I try to pay every debt I owe on time and always save something from every pay check, however small.

7. I like people and never harbor any malice or hatred toward any person in the world; I like places and have yet to be anywhere that I do not like—I go there with the intention of liking the place.

8. I am a confirmed optimist believing that even in this life evil men will be punished by their own unhappiness and good men will be rewarded. "It's better further on."

9. I try to close each day as if it were the last day I'd be on earth, closing the books on all regrets, worries and annoyances.

10. The last thing I do at night is to count one by one the blessings of the day. This makes me so thankful and happy that I soon drift into pleasant sleep. In this spirit I hope to close life's journey and drift into eternity.

SERMONS I HAVE PREACHED

by

George W. DeHoff

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by

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INTRODUCTION

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Corinthians 1:21). In this sinful world there is nothing, absolutely nothing, more vital than gospel preaching. God ordained it an integral part of His scheme of human redemption. Man’s greatest need is salvation from sin, and the gospel of Christ, the message to be preached, is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). This makes preaching the most important work in the world.

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). Since there can be no preaching without preachers, preachers are also a part of God’s divine plan. When it comes to preachers, few in the 20th century equal and none surpass George W. DeHoff, the extraordinary author of this book of sermon outlines. Wherever men know and love the truth, his name is a household word. He is a versatile man—a jack of many trades and master of them all! He is a traveler, a debater, a lecturer, a civic worker, an educator, an author, and a business man. But he is preeminently a preacher—everything else takes second place to this. He began preaching in 1929, when he was only 15 years old, and has continued for nearly half a century. The success and effectiveness of his preaching is attested by the fact that he has preached in local work, meetings, and campaigns in 35 states and five foreign countries and has baptized more than 10,000 people, a number scarcely equaled in this generation.

“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.” (Isaiah 30:8). From George W. DeHoff have come some of the most useful and practical books among those who seek

to restore New Testament Christianity. His **DeHoff's Bible Handbook, Why We Believe the Bible, and Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained** are simply unsurpassed. **Gospel Sermons, Plain Bible Preaching—Volume 2, Sermons on First Corinthians, and Minister's Manual** are homiletical companions that thousands would not be without. But in addition to these he has written about 75 classroom workbooks. His works have passed the six million mark in sales. Many Christians around the world (including this writer) eagerly await every new book, and when it appears they are never disappointed. All his works are both constructive and instructive, and can be described as profoundly simple and yet simply profound.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (II Timothy 2:2). Great preaching is the result of long hours of preparation. Preachers, young and old, who wish to succeed in this vital work should study both the methods and message of those who have succeeded. In this book brother DeHoff shares with you some of his finest sermon material—sermons that have led thousands to Christ and instilled deeper devotion in thousands more. With a little adaptation to fit each personality they can and should be used by hundreds of preachers to turn the world right side up. How grateful we should be to him, and to our Heavenly Father, for making them available in this form. If used and practiced, the sermons herein contained will make the world a better place to live and heaven a brighter place to anticipate.

—Howard Winters

August 23, 1974
Duncan, South Carolina

THE SHEPHERD PSALM

Psalms 23

When we consider the beautiful and enduring twenty-third psalm, we find a literary gem unsurpassed. First learned by little children at mother's knee, it becomes dearer still to aged saints approaching "*the valley of the shadow*". In time of sorrow, discouragement and apprehension, perhaps more comfort has been derived from this pastoral psalm than from any other. Its imagery is so vivid, its metaphors so simple and its lessons so plain, that it has been endeared to the heart of generations of people of all ages and races. Its truth is so evident that it has stood the test of time.

"The Lord is my shepherd"—The Absolute, "I Am", the eternal, whose works remain.

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." (Psalms 80:1).

"The Shepherd, the stone of Israel." (Genesis 49:24).

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." (Ezekiel 34:12).

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Hebrews 13:20).

"For ye were as sheep going astray; but now are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (I Peter 2:25).

"My shepherd"—Notice the use of the possessive pronoun "my". It implies belonging or ownership. Man is small,

(Psalms 8) and yet God takes note of him to care for him. (Matthew 6:26). Every Christian is encouraged to think of God as his shepherd. (John 10:2). Christ said, *"I am the Good Shepherd."* (John 10:11). *"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."* (Isaiah 40:11).

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27).

"I shall not want"—Trust in the Lord. The shepherd is ahead of his sheep. He is their eyes, ears, heart and brain. He is their advance guard.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19). We have a promissory note drawn on the bank of heaven and written in the blood of Jesus.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures". The picture given is one of rest and contentment. *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28). For many who must labor daily in order to make a living, rest is the dearest pleasure of their lives. In our hectic, modern world, the picture of quiet, still meadows—*"green pastures"*—is one of unequalled delight. As the shepherd rests the sheep, so God provides rest for our souls. This is not necessarily a rest of inactivity, but of inner calm and peace. As the sheep are secure because they trust the shepherd to protect them, so we may be secure because we trust God. God's promises are secure—they have never failed once. (Genesis 8:22).

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Hebrews 4:9).

Savior like a shepherd lead us; much we need thy tender care. The green pastures are always there if we will but let the shepherd lead us to them.

“He leadeth me beside the still waters”—The historic Jordan river is a rapidly flowing stream. Sometimes, however, the people would dig trenches or use wells to create pools that would not be so turbulent. Quiet flowing streams are often pictured for the sheep to refresh themselves. In hot, arid regions, a source of fresh water was the difference between life and death. The shepherd saw to it that his sheep did not go thirsty. Christ said, *“I am the water of life.”* The importance of water is seen in David’s touching scene in I Chronicles 11:17-19. Water is associated with life and is necessary for life. As the sheep thirst for water, so we thirst for spiritual water to nourish our souls.

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” (Psalms 42:1-2).

Jesus often sat by Galilee to rest. He calmed the storm there.

“He restoreth my soul”. In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd is pictured as leaving the 99 sheep who were safe in the fold, and going out into the craigs and wilds to look for the one lost lamb. As the shepherd will restore the lost lamb to the fold, so God restores our souls when they are weary, discouraged, or lost. We are restored by His word and by prayer. The healing and restorative power of God is emphasized.

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names’ sake.” In John 10:1-18, Jesus gives the story of the good

shepherd who leads the sheep. The sheep follow him because they know his voice and have faith and trust in him. They will not follow a stranger because they do not know his voice. Throughout history, men have achieved greatness because they were led of God. Moses established a new nation, Job retained his faith in God and ultimately prospered, Paul fought for Christianity and John wrote on the lonely isle of Patmos. Each allowed God to lead him. Christ said, *“Lo, I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world.”* (Matthew 28:20).

“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,”—We are all “under the shadow of death”. Sometimes the shepherd had to lead the sheep through dark places where the wolves and bears could hide. They would not attack the sheep while the shepherd was there to defend them. **Though** they were in the very face of death, they did not fear, for the shepherd was with them. We cannot remove ourselves from the hazards of death which abound in this world—either physical or spiritual. We can put our faith in the shepherd who knows the way through the valley of the shadow and can guide us safely home.

David, Israel’s king, had to flee to the mountains for his life on more than one occasion. Paul passed through the valley. He was told to stop preaching or be killed. Christ brings the light of immortality to us.

“I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” All the powers of evil are nothing beside the power of the good shepherd to protect his sheep from them.

“Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” The *rod* was used to beat off enemies. The *staff* was used to kill snakes, and as a guide for the sheep. Christ is our guide.

“They comfort me.” *“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.”* (Psalms 138:7).

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” Often the sheep would graze in the sight of their predators. The wolf, bear and lion would not risk death at the hands of the shepherd. They had to watch enviously from a distance while the sheep peacefully grazed under the shepherd’s watchful care. We are cared for in the presence of our enemies by the good shepherd, the Lord.

“My cup runneth over.” I have no need for anything. Thou art surely able to supply all my need—both spiritual and material. (Matthew 6:32-33). God cares for His children and supplies all—yea, more than—they need.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” As long as the sheep dwelt in the care of the shepherd, they received the blessings of that care—his love, protection, food, water and rest. Our heavenly father provides perpetual care for our needs as long as we follow Him.

“The house of the Lord”—our heavenly home. (John 14:1-3). (Revelation 21-22).

WHY JESUS WEPT

What is the shortest verse in the Bible? Everyone knows of course. It is "*Jesus wept.*" (John 11:35). What many do not know are the circumstances under which it is said the Master wept. Some have no appreciation of the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, could weep and did weep.

Many centuries after John wrote, "*Jesus wept*", a great scholar was dividing the Bible into verses. He came to this profound sentence, "*Jesus wept.*", and decided it should be a verse by itself.

"*Jesus wept.*" What emotions that stirs in our hearts. He who created all things, wept. He who calmed the angry waves of the raging sea, who opened the eyes of the blind, who unstopped the ears of the deaf, who even called the dead from their graves; he who could even forgive sins—with all the power in heaven and earth—wept! He could weep and did weep.

He is the Son of God in a special sense. He is the "*only begotten Son of God*". He is also the Son of Man. He came and identified himself with human problems. It was the title he used the most often.

Nothing better identified Christ with man than the fact that He wept. Tears are the common lot of mankind. The New Testament tells of three times when Jesus wept. In relating the first of these occasions John gives the shortest verse in the Bible.

I. Jesus Wept in Sympathy for the Sorrows of Others.

The village of Bethany was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem. Here lived Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom Jesus loved. Their little home furnished a resting place. When tired and weary from discussing with the Scribes and Phari-

sees, he found there quiet, companionship and understanding hearts. Here Martha served his meals and Mary “*sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.*” (Luke 10:38-42).

Near Jericho a messenger came telling of Lazarus’ sickness. Jesus, knowing of Lazarus’ death, prepared to go to raise him. The disciples questioned his going, fearful that He would be stoned.

Martha met Him and told Him of her brother’s death. Mary joined them. Jesus wept.

Some have suggested that Jesus wept because He was going to bring Lazarus back to a world of sorrow. This is not the case. Paul said, “*Weep with those who weep*”, (Romans 12:15). Jesus joined in their sorrow. He sympathized. His heart was touched.

Aren’t you glad that Jesus wept by the grave of his friend? It brings Him closer to us.

Christ no longer dwells in an earthly body, but He is “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*”. (Hebrews 4:15). No pain, no sorrow can come but that He knows and feels. God always hears and we may come boldly to the throne of grace. Yes, thank God, Jesus wept.

II. Jesus Wept Over Lost Opportunity

During the last week before the cross, Jesus spent the night at Mary and Martha’s home. The following day He went to Jerusalem. He paused on the Mount of Olives. “*He beheld the city and wept over it.*” (Luke 19:41). Jerusalem was in a bad way. Soon a foreign army would invade her and great desolation would be hers. But that is not why Jesus wept. Something worse had happened. Jerusalem had lost her opportunities.

“*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would*

I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matthew 23:37-38). “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.” (Luke 19:42).

Jerusalem had been a religious center for a thousand years. Prophets had walked her streets to be ignored and sometimes killed. The law of God was delivered to be mutilated and perverted. Religionists had by their traditions, transgressed the law of God. Their worship had become vain. (Matthew 15:9). They had drawn near to God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and lesser sectarian groups emphasized minor points and neglected love, justice, mercy and faith. They decorated the graves of the prophets but if they had been there they would have killed them. (Matthew 23:29-31). They strained at gnats and swallowed camels. (Matthew 23:23-24).

In his great canvas, “Christ Mourning Over the City”, Paul Flandrin pictured Christ weeping over a modern city with its crowded tenements and unlighted cathedral.

If Christ wept over ancient Jerusalem, what of us? He prayed for unity: we are divided. (John 17:10-23). The great truths He gave us cannot be changed by all the councils, creeds, and synods in the world. Millions are going to the judgement unprepared and many do not even care. They would rather quibble over how many cups to have on the communion table, what kind of bread to have, or how long a preacher should locate in one place. Multitudes go without food and clothing while we stop our ears to their cries. Indeed, we crucify Christ afresh day by day with our actions.

G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, the preacher-poet of Birming-

ham, England, in his poem “Indifference”, said:

“When Jesus came to Golgotha,
 They hanged Him on a tree,
 They drove great nails through hands and feet,
 And made a Calvary.
 They crowned Him with a crown of thorns,
 Red were His wounds and deep,
 For those were crude and cruel days,
 And human flesh was cheap.

“When Jesus came to Birmingham
 They simply passed Him by,
 They never hurt a hair of Him,
 They only *let* Him die;
 For men have grown more tender,
 And they would not give Him pain,
 They only just passed down the street,
 And left Him in the rain.

“Still Jesus cried, ‘Forgive them,
 For they know not what they do!’
 And still it rained the winter rain
 That drenched Him through and through;
 The crowd went home and left the streets
 Without a soul to see,
 And Jesus crouched against a wall
 And cried for Calvary.”

III. Weeping In the Battle

Little is known of the verse, Hebrews 5:7. It is apparently a reference to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. *“When He had offered up prayers and supplications with*

strong crying and tears . . .". Matthew says, "*He began to be sorrowful and heavy*". (Matthew 26:37). Mark says, He "*began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.*" (Mark 14: 33).

Jesus described His own condition by saying, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:*". Thrice He prayed, "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matthew 26:39).

Why did He pray thus? Was He afraid His flesh would not contain His spirit long enough to reach Calvary? Not likely. It was the supreme battle between His will and God's will. He did not want to die. He knew death was unavoidable. He said, "*Not my will but thine be done.*" Like Paul's thorn in the flesh, (II Corinthians 12:7-9), he was given sufficient grace to bear it.

The late Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University, was born with a terrible disfigurement—a birthmark which almost covered his face. He heard the other children make fun of him and came home crying to his mother to make it go away. His mother explained that it was impossible to get rid of it, but that he could grow a soul so beautiful that all who knew him would forget it. Today his name is revered throughout the world.

Christians may not rid themselves of burdens and handicaps, but with "*strong crying and tears*" can take them to the Father with His promise to furnish needed help.

We will all, sooner or later, face our own *Gethsemanes*, as Ella Wheeler Wilcox has written:

“Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
 Bridged over by our broken dreams;
 Behind the misty cap of years,
 Behind the great salt fount of tears,

The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

“All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden’s gate,
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
‘Not mine but Thine!’—who only pray,
‘Let this cup pass!’—and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.”

Oh, the tears that have been shed in our generation—
battles, separations, poverty, disease and disappointment—it’s
good to have a Savior who understands.

†††

WHAT TO DO WITH LIFE'S BURDENS

"For every man shall bear his own burden." (Galatians 6:5).

"Bear ye one another's burdens". (Galatians 6:2).

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." (Psalms 55:22).

It is the lot of men and women everywhere to have burdens. There is an old Spanish proverb which says that, "No home is there anywhere that does not sooner or later have its hush." Sooner or later all men and women have their burdens.

Many burdens may be seen. The deepest and most poignant are not seen. If we knew what fierce battles some are fighting, what weighty burdens they carry, it would teach us restraint and charity. That very fact should give us caution to a marked degree.

The Bible makes three statements about our burdens:

I. "Every man shall bear his own burden."

Our burdens are not transferable. Every life is isolated and segregated from every other life. To a remarkable degree every person lives alone. You were born into the world alone, you will leave it alone, and in between the cradle and the grave you very largely live alone. No man can do your duty for you. "To every man his work", the Master teaches. Not "to every man *a* work", or "to every man *some* work", but "to every man *his* work". God has a program for you to carry out, a niche for you to fill, a task for you to face. He has given a life for you to live separate from every other life in the world. No other person can believe for you, repent for you, confess for you, or be baptized for you. None can answer for you at the judgement bar of God. Everyone must

give an account of himself.

Nobody will get lost in the crowd; there will be no hiding behind others and no hiding behind an organization. There is a danger today that the individual will become lost in the crowd. God sees the individual. His eye is on one. That one must see that he does what is right whether others do or not. Jonathan Edwards said, “Resolved that every man should do right. Resolved, secondly, that whether any man does right or not, I will, so help me God.” We must bear our own burdens.

II. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Burdens are often community burdens or social burdens –burdens to be shared with others. Others are to share their burdens with us. Consider the scriptures in their settings. Many heresies arise from taking a verse out of its setting. Note the verse before, Galatians 6:1: *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* The emphasis here is to help a brother bear his sin.

The primary reference is to those who have gone astray. Here is the most neglected task of all. *“If a man be overtaken in a fault . . . ”*, criticize him? Denounce him? No. Restore him in the spirit of meekness.

You can doubtless recall people who began well but left the Lord. When men go astray and keep going astray, it is our task to go after them and seek to recover them. We must do this in a spirit of love, not of self-righteous gloating over another’s misfortune.

In the broader meaning, we are to share burdens with those all about us. There are burdens of the sorrowing.

There may be a broken heart in every pew. You can think now of families with great burdens or sorrow. Try to help them carry it.

All about us are people with heavy burdens, terrific burdens. Weighty burdens are on the hearts of our teachers, preachers, and civil rulers. They serve and lead. Try to make it easy for them to do it.

How may we help people? The Bible says, "*Jesus went about doing good.*" That should be our attitude as we try to help others. There are a number of ways we may help people each day.

(1) **Live the right kind of life yourself.** This may be your greatest contribution to your community. Gladstone said, "One example is worth a thousand arguments." One Savonarola turned the tide of wicked Florence. One Aristedes lifted Athens higher. Ten righteous people would have saved Sodom. The people of Constantinople said of John Chrysostom, "It were better for the sun to cease shining than for John Chrysostom to cease his preaching." Your greatest contribution is the right kind of life!

(2) **We may help people by believing in them.** Jesus came to Matthew, a tax gatherer hated by his own race of people, and called him to follow. He did it! To Zacchaeus he said, "*Come down.*" I think nothing of that system of espionage which is forever trying to spy out the faults and weaknesses of other people. We are to behave with compassion and brotherliness and sympathy for a needy world. We are to believe in people. There was once a little girl who was sent to the store to buy milk. On the way home she dropped and spilled it. A scolding woman had seen and remarked, "I bet your mother will wear you out when you get home." Fighting back her tears, the little girl answered, "No, she won't. My mother believes in giving me another chance." This must

be our attitude toward others.

(3) **We must encourage people.** It is a sin to be a miserable discourager. Men and women are fighting a big battle. They do not need the weight of discouragement tied on them. They need wings put on them so they can fly. Bobbie Burns, the great Scottish poet, saw a small boy following him around. "Walter, what do you wish?" "I wish that someday I might be a great writer like you." Bobbie Burns put his hand on the boy's head and said, "You can be a great writer and you will be." That little boy was Sir Walter Scott, and to the day of his death he never ceased to be grateful to Bobbie Burns, who spoke to a weary heart and encouraged him.

III. "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee." (Psalms 55:22). The psalmist wrote, "*Oh that I had the wings like a dove for then I would fly away and be at rest.*" His burdens were so great he wanted to flee away. "I will run, give it up, I will not stay with it." Who has not felt like this? But that would not win, or get you out of the wilderness. As long as you have your memory you would still have your burdens. Have you problems of perplexity, neglected duty, or sin on your conscience? You cannot run away from it. What are you to do? Where are you to go? There is only one place. "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.*"

How will God sustain us? In one of two ways:

- (1) **He may take the burden away, or**
- (2) **He may give us the strength to bear it.**

Daniel, was not kept from the lions' den, but God did close the lions' mouths. The three Hebrew children were not kept out of the firey furnace, but God did keep the fire from burning them.

Jesus in Gethsemane prayed, "*if it be possible, let this*

cup pass.” It was not possible, but God gave Him the strength to bear it.

Paul had a thorn in the flesh. Three times he besought God to remove it. We do not know what it was, but Paul called it a *“messenger of Satan sent to buffet me”*. God did not remove it, but told Paul, *“My grace is sufficient for thee.”* God gives us increased grace to bear our burdens.

Cast your burdens on the Lord. Do not seek to bear them alone. Seek not to stem the flood. Do not go through that long bitter night alone. No matter what your burden is, Christ will sustain you.

Have you learned the secret of peace in a world torn with strife? With burden and battle, perplexity, cloud and shadow all about have you learned to cast your burden on the Lord?

A strong man in yonder city, whose beautiful wife was taken from him after an illness of a few hours, was left with a golden haired girl of four or five summers. The body was carried to the cemetery for the simple service. Every heart was broken—the grief was so appalling. Neighbors gathered and said, “You must take the girl and come home with us for a few days.” He replied, “I must go right back to the same place where she was, to the room from which she went away, and I must fight it out with this baby right there.” And back they went. He told about it all the next day.

The baby was late and long going to sleep. Oh, was there ever anything more pathetic than the cry of a child for the mother that will never come back again? Long and late the little one in the crib sobbed because she could not go to sleep, and the big man reached his hand over to the crib and petted her and mothered her as best he could, and after awhile the little girl out of sorrow for her father stopped the crying. After awhile the man, thinking she was asleep, said to

God, "I trust you, but O it is so dark." The little one started sobbing again. "Papa, did you ever know it to be so dark? I can't even see you, it is so dark." Then sobbing, the little thing said, "Papa, you love me if it is dark, don't you? You love me if you don't see me, don't you Papa?" He reached for her, took her out of her crib, and held her next to his heart until she had gone to sleep. When she was asleep he passed his baby's cry up to God. "Father, it is so dark I cannot see. It is as dark as midnight. But you love me if it is dark. I will trust you though you slay me. With my baby and my grief, my utter desolation, I will turn my case over to God." And then, the darkness was like unto morning. God always comes to those who trust Him.

Henry Van Dyke, in his poem "Peace", said:

With eager heart, and will on fire,
I sought to win my great desire.
"Peace shall be mine," I said. But life
Grew bitter in the endless strife.

My soul was weary, and my pride
Was wounded deep. To heaven I cried:
"God give me peace or I must die."
The dumb stars glittered, no reply.

Broken at last, I bowed my head,
Forgetting all myself and said:
"Whatever comes, His will be done."
And in that moment, peace was won.

Whatever your burden or grief or sorrow, your doubt or disappointment, your regret or remorse or conscious failure—dare to cast your burden, yourself, and your all on the Lord.

INGRATITUDE
MOST UNNECESSARY WORD IN THE BIBLE
LUKE 17:11-19

What word has broken more hearts, destroyed more homes, caused more tears to be shed, and created more hatred than any other? Ingratitude.

I. The Story of the Ten Lepers

1. Leprosy was a terrible disease. At that time in the history of the world it was incurable. Description of the disease, its history, and my visit to the leper hospital in Carville, Louisiana.
2. Leprosy was a type of sin. As leprosy fouls the body so sin fouls the soul.
3. "Go show thyself to the priest . . ."
4. *Quarantine* was commanded by Moses before disease germs were known to man. How?
5. Ten were healed . . . imagine the joy of a man who suddenly realizes he has been healed! Naaman's "flesh became as a little child".
6. Only one returned to give thanks. Jesus said, "Where are the nine?"

II. Many are Ungrateful Today

1. Children—Thank your parents: father and mother.
2. Teachers—Public school, Sunday school, church.
3. Preachers—thank them now. Let your mind leap back through the years . . . if they still live, thank them.
4. Flag—be grateful to live in this land of ours. There is no other like it.
5. Bible Examples—

- A. Saul, when humble, was used of God.
- B. Jeshurun waxed fat; lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.
6. Church—Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5. “I love thy church O God . . .”. I do not criticize the church. Some members even write books criticizing the church. There are enough of the devil and his crowd to do this without Christians helping.
7. Boy at Northwestern University who swam out into the icy waters of Lake Michigan again and again to rescue the drowning victims of a shipwreck. He became paralyzed as a result of this. Years later when interviewed about the disaster he remarked that to him the most unfortunate thing of all was that none of the people whose lives he had saved ever thanked him. (Story in 20th Century Christian).

III. How is it with you?



WHAT CRUCIFIED JESUS?

There have been many attempts throughout the ages to determine *who* crucified Jesus. The Jews think they should not be blamed because there were Gentiles involved as well. Since the individuals involved are all dead anyway, the question of *who* crucified Jesus becomes academic. The Jews did it; the Gentiles did it—our sins crucified Jesus. The people who crucified Jesus are dead; the motives which prompted their action are as alive and well today as they were in the time of Christ.

Let us examine not *who*, but *what* crucified Jesus. It is possible to crucify Christ *afresh* if we are now guilty of the same sins as those people were. Let us find and eliminate from our hearts the sins which crucified Jesus and put him to an open shame.

I. Envy

Envy crucified Jesus. Pilate "*knew that for envy they had delivered him*" up to be crucified. (Matthew 27:18). Leading criminologists have listed the main causes of capital crimes. All put envy and jealousy at the top of the list. There is no sin a man will not commit if he gets his heart filled with envy and jealousy.

Joseph's brethren sold him into slavery for envy. "*His brethren envied him*", Genesis 37:11.

The family of **Moses** envied him. Any family should be proud to have a great world leader come from that family. Moses was trained and skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was brought up in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He brought three million people from slavery and was the greatest lawgiver the world has ever known. His sister, **Miriam**, envied him. She had watched over him among

the bullrushes, had called his mother as his nurse, and was proud of her brother, but when Moses led the people out of Egypt, he got so much publicity and the people sang his praises until she could not take it. She was stricken with leprosy and thus punished for her envy.

David had saved King Saul's life as well as his kingdom. The people praised David and sang his praises. Did Saul praise? No. Saul envied David and sought to kill him.

In the story of the **Prodigal Son** given in Luke 15, we see a picture of the older brother as a tragic grouch. When the lost son returned home his father gave a big party. The elder brother envied that son, his own brother. He refused to come in and rejoice. Many members of the church are like that today. If petted, pampered and given enough attention, they will be happy, but if anyone else gets credit, they will pout and be sad. They make the path of the returning prodigal hard. Paul said, "*Love envieth not*", (I Corinthians 13:4). Many let their envy for others cause them to attempt to block movements for the kingdom of God.

Is your heart free from envy and jealousy? Can you weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice without becoming envious? Are you willing to work for the Lord and not worry about who gets the credit? Are you crucifying the Son of God afresh? Paul catalogs envy with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, murders, drunkenness, and bad company. Envy is at the head of the list. Envy crucified the Son of God.

II. Greed

Greed, the love of money, crucified Jesus. Judas Iscariot sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver. In Matthew 26: 14-16, we find people bargaining over the Son of God. It is

amazing what people will do for money. It is possible to even hire men killed for money. Many people will sell out for a very small price. If you sell a man whiskey, you are not doing him any good. If you sell him dope of some kind, it were better to starve. In the business world there are people who do not care what they sell. They do not care for others. Their only interest is money. Such are the dealers in beer, wine and whiskey.

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. The oldest child received the family name and family heritage. *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."* Esau cared nothing for the good name of his father and his family. He sold it for a bowl of soup! Some today will destroy their family name and reputation for even less. We have people in the church today with this same attitude.

A lady in Bible times had some expensive perfume which only wealthy people could afford. She took this precious ointment and anointed Christ with it. Judas Iscariot objected. "It could have been sold and given to the poor," he said. Actually, he was a thief and had the moneybag!

We need to ask ourselves today: am I greedy? Do I put principle above the dollar? Am I crucifying the Lord afresh by my greed and lust for money?

The church suffers from greed. Some members refuse to give. *"Mortify . . . fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."* Colossians 3:5-6.

III. Ignorance

Ignorance crucified Christ. In Acts 3:14-17, Peter said, *"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life,*

whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses . . . And now brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it “*Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*” (I Corinthians 2:8). Paul, when speaking of his own persecution of Christians, stated in I Timothy 1:13, “*I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*”

Ignorance is the principal cause of sin. The masses frequently follow someone without thinking. Men’s minds have often been changed by propaganda. False doctrines are often accepted because of ignorance. America would be a bad place from which to go up to the judgement pleading ignorance. Anyone has or could easily obtain a Bible. We are responsible for what we know and accountable for what we have an opportunity to find out. Much study is a “*weariness of the flesh*”, but we had as well get with it. We could know better than what we do.

IV. Cowardice

Cowardice crucified Jesus. Jesus was crucified because people were afraid to speak up. “*All the disciples forsook him, and fled.*” (Matthew 26:56). “*Peter followed him afar off.*” Jesus was led to trial with no man to stand by him. Today we just do not want to get involved if there is a battle for truth and right. Many today will not stand for the truth; they become discouraged and quit. He swore and even denied that he knew the Lord. (Matthew 26: 69-75).

Pilate was a coward. He could have gone down in history as a great man. He knew Jesus was innocent and was delivered for envy but he was a coward to do anything about it. He would not stand up and be counted. His wife even pleaded with him to “*have thou nothing to do with that just man*”. Pilate would not stand up for what he knew to be

right. He sacrificed truth for political expediency. Many today are guilty of Pilate's cowardice. They are afraid of what people will think.

In John 12:42-43 we read of some people who believed that Jesus was the Son of God, but would not confess Him because they were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue. Are we willing to stand up and fight for the truth today or do we know the truth and keep quiet about it when the battle is on?

No matter how lofty your position, remember to honor Christ. It is cowardice to do otherwise.

V. Conclusion

These are the sins that crucified Jesus:

Envy

Greed

Ignorance

Cowardice

We need to ask ourselves: Am I guilty of these sins today? All of us probably have these sins in our hearts to some extent. We need to work at eliminating them lest we be guilty of crucifying the Christ afresh and putting Him to an open shame.

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THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

Matthew 28:1-10; 16:20; I Corinthians 15:1-26

Introduction

“If Christ hath not been raised then is our preaching vain” . . . without content—nothing in it. There was something in Paul’s message. He would not have been stirred by an empty message. He could not have stirred others with one. *“Your faith is vain”* . . . futile, insipid—if there was no resurrection of the Lord, then nothing has a meaning.

Infidels and Christians agree:

- (1) That Christ lived, died and was buried and the tomb sealed.
- (2) That on the third day the body was gone.
- (3) That the disciples believed Christ arose from the dead and that millions of people since have believed it. What became of the Lord’s body? This is the battle over an empty grave.

I. What became of the Body?

But three things could have happened: (1) the enemies of our Lord could have stolen it away, (2) the disciples could have stolen it, or (3) God could have raised Him from the dead.

1. Did the enemies of the Lord steal the body?

(1) **They had no motive.** The body was already in their possession. The tomb was sealed and the Romans were guarding it. They had Christ exactly where they wanted him—dead and buried. The priests watched to keep Christ in.

(2) **Their attitude on Pentecost indicates they did not have the body.** Here Christ lived and died. Peter preached that great sermon. Three thousand enemies

believed. A false religion would have started 1,000 miles away many years afterward. Peter said, “This man you spat on a few days ago is resurrected,” and they believed. If they had the body this would have been the perfect time to produce it and prove Peter a liar. They did not.

2. Did the disciples steal the body?

(1) **The testimony of the Roman guards was that “we slept”.** They would have been put to death for sleeping on guard duty—they would not have admitted it. If they had been asleep, they could have seen nothing. The Jews paid them to say this.

(2) **The disciples had no motive for stealing the body.** They expected no resurrection until the last day. Christ had been decently buried in a good new tomb and the disciples were satisfied. Peter went fishing.

(3) **They had embalmed the body** and brought more spices on the first day of the week to further preserve it.

(4) **Mary Magdalene said, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him.”**

(John 20:9). The disciples did not believe it when they heard it. They were shocked and amazed. They ran to see the empty tomb. (Luke 24:12). Thomas also doubted that this could be so. (John 20:24-25). The disciples wanted a glorious kingdom like that of Solomon. They had no desire to see Christ’s body moved.

(5) **The disciples could not have stolen the body even if they had wanted to.** The Roman guards stood watch over the tomb. It was the Passover season and the time of the first full moon after the sun crosses the vernal equinox. It was springtime and thousands

of Jews filled the city for the Passover and slept outside in tents and in the streets of the city. Any man who believes that the disciples could have gotten away with the body through that group need not scoff at the credulity of Christians. The enemies did not take him and the friends did not.

II. God Raised Him From the Dead.

1. **The straightforward testimony of the disciples is undeniable.** Had you asked any disciple he would not have quibbled, but would have said, *“He arose”*. Acts 2:24—*“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”* Acts 2:38; Acts 1:21-22—*“Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.”*

2. **The honesty of the apostles testifies to the resurrection of our Lord.**

(1) **There was no gain to lie** about the resurrection—only punishment.

(2) **Their lives rebuke those who say they lied.** Liars do not live like the apostles did, nor do they die like the apostles did. Men will not willingly give up their lives for something they know to be false.

3. **If one rejects their testimony, he must account for:**

(1) **The empty tomb**—where did the body go?

(2) **The change in the apostles**—they were no longer wavering and afraid.

(3) **The conversion of His enemies.**

(4) **The beginning of the Lord’s day at that time.** If there were no Declaration of Independence, then we would have no Fourth of July celebration continuously since that time.

(5) **The beginning of the Lord’s Supper.**

(6) **Baptism**—thousands then and thousands now are raised with Him. (Romans 6:1-6).

(7) **Gospel records**—they were written and believed right then.

(8) **Saul of Tarsus**—as well as 500 other brethren who walked, talked and ate with Him after He arose.

Conclusion

Christ was crucified, buried, and the tomb sealed with Roman guards standing by. On the morning of the third day, angels came from glory, rolled back the stone, and Christ came forth. He appeared to men, women, and great numbers of people. He ascended on high and sits now on the throne of glory. He is our hope, our life, and our glory.

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TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

John 6:66-69

I. Introduction

The incident we consider happened 2,000 years ago beside the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had fed the multitude and had taught some lessons which the disciples considered “hard”. *“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, ‘Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou are that Christ, the Son of the living God.’”* (John 6:66-69).

(1) Ulterior Motives

During Christ’s personal ministry many followed for different reasons: material gain, political preference, some to be fed, others healed, for curiosity, etc. When the multitudes learned the real purpose for His coming was not material but spiritual and that His kingdom was “*not of this world*” many turned back and walked no more with Him. Jesus asked, “*Will you also go away and leave me?*” Christ believed in the sovereignty of a man’s will—He had no forced followers. He left it wholly to man to decide. He preferred a small company of true believers to a large company seeking the loaves and fishes. Real strength depends on quality, not quantity. Christ stressed proper motives. Peter made many mistakes but he had the right motive. He lied, denied, and followed afar off, but he only wanted to serve. He delivered the first sermon on Pentecost Day.

(2) Causes of Desertion

Many desert today. There are wayside hearers who allow the birds to pluck the seed out of their hearts. There are the rocky ground hearers who have no soil in which to

nourish the seed. Some, like Lot's wife, are unable to resist the attractions of the world and turn back. Others cannot understand all of God's plan and want immediate results. A few, like Demas, love this present world. Some are merely peeved at another member or think they have found a hypocrite in the church. They go away.

II. Our Question—To Whom Shall We Go?

Our fleshly nature causes us to make so many mistakes, our associates subject us to so many temptations, we live in a world so full of enticing attractions, our burdens are so heavy, our sorrows so deep, our ignorance so stupendous, our questions so many, our sins so shameful, our strength so frail, our desire for immortality so intense, that we feel the need of someone to whom we may go to sympathize with us in sorrow, to help in trouble, to solve our problems, answer our questions, forgive our sins and set us free. Peter's question is yours and mine—*"To whom shall we go?"*

(1) To Nature?

The great book of nature is filled with the praise of its creator. *"The heavens declare the glory of God . . ."* But there is no pardon, no release from guilt, no rest for the sick soul, no hope of resurrection or immortality. Nature is as silent as the tomb.

(2) To the World?

Shall we go to the fickle and worldly people—those who live for the present only, thinking only to amuse themselves for the moment? Shall we, as the Epicureans, "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die"? Multitudes seek to drown their problems in drink or pleasure, but when trouble comes they seek comfort from those who follow Christ.

(3) To Infidelity?

Shall we go to infidelity, skepticism or atheism? Shall

we close our ears and eyes to all problems? Shall we muffle the cry of our souls for life eternal? Shall we answer the eternal longing for life beyond the grave by saying there is none? Shall we make sport of life and death? Even infidels long for something more. Robert G. Ingersoll, a famous infidel, said at his brother's grave, "Hope sees a star and listening love hears a rustle of a wing."

(4) To Science?

We may study the book of the universe and all that is in it but our hearts are not touched. We have addressed the mind but not the heart. We can learn the age of rocks but not the "Rock of Ages". Science does not answer: Whence came I? Why am I here? Whither go I? Science does not account for the origin of matter, the origin of life, or the origin of conscience. It gives no purpose for life. Man is not satisfied with this. Man refuses to be satisfied with this short span of life. On every hand he sees evidence of life beyond the grave. All in the universe has a purpose. Is man the only stray? Why is he here? Science has no answer.

(5) To Judiasm?

Going to Judiasm would be like turning backward, lingering and waiting for the morning, surrounded by types and figures with a law that man could never keep which was a galling yoke on men's necks for 1,500 years as they waited for Christ.

(6) To Anti-Christian Religions?

Should we go to Buddhism with its despair without God as a father? To Confucianism that calls for the worship of ancestors no better than men around us now? To Mohammedanism with its false promises and lustful life? To Brahminism with its multitude of gods? All we have to do is see the condition of the people following these religions to realize they offer no solution.

(7) To Human Creeds?

No creed can lift us higher than its source. The creations of man fail to satisfy the soul. There is satisfaction only in Christ. (Acts 4:12).

(8) To Penance?

Shall we go to penances, tears and punishments? Have we not learned that "*to obey is better than to sacrifice*"? Eternal life is not obtained by penances, long journeys to shrines, nor by bowing before images and crosses.

(9) To Human Governments?

Human governments cannot even solve the problems of the distribution of wealth, unemployment, the care of the needy, or of wars and killing. Even if they governed perfectly they would not touch the rim of eternity.

III. What It Means To Turn From Christ

Christ is the only perfect example of right living; a man with whom even his enemies found no fault. He could lash to shame the self-righteous Pharisees, drive the money changers from the temple, but call in gentle tones for little children to come to Him and to a sinful woman He could say, "*Go thy way and sin no more.*"

He is the only perfect teacher the world has ever known. His teaching stood the abuse of friends and the railing of enemies. It is a philosophy without a fallacy and has made respectable citizens of the lowest of men.

When we turn from Christ, we turn from the Bible. It is the only book showing the way to heaven. We throw overboard the pilot, break the compass and destroy the chart. We set ourselves afloat on an uncharted sea in the rudderless, leaking boat of human wisdom. We inflict ourselves with the malady of sin and kill the only physician who can heal it. We starve our souls and throw away the bread of life. We scorch

our tongues on the desert while we pour out the water of life on the wasting sands. We head for the final judgement refusing the services of the only one who can plead our case. We become sheep without a shepherd when we forget, "*The Lord is my shepherd*". We are tossed, torn and bruised by the storms of life forgetting that "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" We bathe ourselves in tears while our backs are turned on Him who can wipe away all tears from our eyes. We devote ourselves to drudgery and tire our souls to exhaustion while we forget Him who pleads, "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*" We fall beneath the weight of our sins forgetting Him whose blood cleanses from all unrighteousness. With a love for life unquenchable, we turn from the only source of life. With the fear and dread of death upon us we turn from Him who conquered death and holds the key to every grave. With intellectual and spiritual darkness hovering over us we turn from the light that can pierce such darkness.

If you have never come to Christ, He pleads with you to do it. If you have turned away He asks you to repent and return. To whom shall we go but Christ?

You are a creature of two worlds—time and eternity. It requires two summers to grow the hollyhock: one for the stalk and one for the bloom. It requires two worlds to complete God's purpose: we attend school here and graduate into eternity. Only Christ offers something beyond the tomb.

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WHY WE BELIEVE IN GOD PSALMS 19

There are two classes of people in the world: those who believe in God as the Creator, Guardian and Rewarder of the universe, and those who do not, who think men are accidents who didn't come from anywhere and are not going anywhere but are merely fly specks on the windowpane of time taking a dizzy whirl until one day when the glass breaks and that is the end. Most people of all ages have believed in God. Why? We can give some reasons, but we cannot hope to fathom the subject—the smallest fish in the ocean never complained of too much water.

No atheist can truly say, "There is no God." To know this to be a fact he should have made extensive explorations in time and eternity—in the material and the spiritual world. He would have to be everywhere and know everything, lest the one thing he did not know be God. Atheists are always afraid there is a God. Christians are secure and free from doubts. Why is this so?

I. **Something has always existed.**

Something cannot come from nothing. Something is, therefore something **always** was. There are only two things in existence. They are mind and matter. Which of these has existed from all eternity?

- (1) **Mind is superior to matter.** Mind knows; matter is known. Mind moves and modifies matter. The chemist is greater than the chemicals which he handles.
- (2) **That which existed from all eternity had spontaneity and force.** Without spontaneity, matter remains dead—without force, there is no event.

- (3) **Other attributes are in existence as love, hate, and feeling.** These things exist in mind but not in matter, therefore we must conclude that mind is eternal. A great eternal mind—intelligent, with planning and feeling has existed from all eternity. Christians call this God.

II. Intelligent Causation

We believe in God because the universe exhibits marks of intelligent causation. All the works of man are examples of causation.

- (1) **We see a house and we know it has a builder.** Though we never find the builder, yet we know he exists as we look at his work. We see a watch and we know that there was a watchmaker, and something about him from the product that he made. In the same way, we may know that God exists by seeing the things which He has made.
- (2) **The human body exhibits intricate design.** As the electric system of a city exhibits design, so does the nervous system of man with the brain and spinal cord and nerves running to every part of the body. As a city water system is wonderful in its complexity, so the system of veins and arteries in the body is wonderful to behold.
- (3) **Astronomy tells us of God.** The sun, proud monarch of the day, makes his journey through space and operates with mathematical precision. At night with the naked eye one may see as many as 6,000 stars. They do not go by chance. We may judge planetary movement of the future by that of the past. Alpha, the closest star, is 25 trillion miles away and its light takes nearly 6 years to reach us. Pollux,

the brighter star of the twins, is 32 light years away, or 192 trillion miles. Truly “*the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork.*” (Psalms 19:1). David said, “*When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?*” (Psalms 8:3-4).

- (4) Two friends slept in their tent on the desert. One put his head out the following morning and said, “Some camels passed here last night.” “How do you know, did you see them?” his friend asked. “Oh no, but I see their tracks,” he replied. If we do not see God, we see His handiwork and we know He has been here.
- (5) An atheist once said, “Show me your God. Let me see, hear, feel, smell or taste him and I will believe.” To which a Christian replied, “Show me your brains –let me see, hear, feel, smell or taste them and I will believe.” We cannot see life. A man waves his hand and we see the effect of life. We do not hear life. As we speak we hear only the effect of life. Life cannot be demonstrated to the senses. Yet we know men live by the way they behave. Though God may be invisible as your life, yet we know he exists because of the evident design and precise operation of the universe.
- (6) If the universe exhibits design, there must be a great *Designer*; if it shows thought, there must be a great *Thinker*; if it is run by the laws of nature, there must be a great *Lawgiver*; if it operates with mathematical precision, there must be a great *Mathematician*; if the universe gives us important chemical combinations

there must be a great *Chemist*. Thomas A. Edison said that the universe is such an engineering feat, "There must be a *Great Engineer*." From these conclusions there is no escape. God exists.

III. Moral Governor

Man is a subject of moral government. His conscience tells him there is a right and a wrong and that he ought to do the right. In his heart man believes justice will be done. All guilty men fear the day of retribution. Martyrs to truth and righteousness in every age have committed their cases to a Higher Court. Since nature knows nothing of justice, there must be One above all who will finally mete out justice to all. Sceptics must fear this day of retribution.

IV. Objections to believing in God lie with equal force against Atheism.

Atheism has difficulties of its own. The atheist must believe several propositions more fantastic than any Christian beliefs. These include the following:

- (1) **An atheist must believe that matter is eternal.**
Matter gives no evidence of self-existence.
- (2) **Atheism assumes that life came from dead matter without outside stimuli.** This would be a greater miracle than the resurrection of the dead.
- (3) **Atheism maintains the absurd position that all things exist as the result of chance—that there was no thought back of them.** Theists believe in design. The opposite of design is chance, sheer chance. A watch cannot by chance bring itself into existence, neither can a universe. If the pieces of a watch were placed together in a box and shaken for a million years they would not arrange themselves into a watch. The organs of the human body could not have arranged

themselves by chance; the design of nature did not just happen. In fact, nothing runs by chance. We are justified, therefore, in believing in an Eternal Mind and discarding chance (whatever that may be).

V. Nature and Logic tell us that “God Is”.

They do not tell us what He is *like*. (As the name on a watch). The Bible tells us about God’s personality.

(1) **He is One.** Deuteronomy 6:4.

(2) **Threefold personality.** Genesis 1:26; Matthew 29:19.

There are three persons in the Godhead. They are one in that they are agreed.

(3) **God is Spirit.** Not material. John 4:24; Luke 24:39.

(4) **Omniscient.** All wise. We see this through the works of God as well as the scriptures.

(5) **Omnipotent.** All powerful. Likewise evident through His works and the scriptures.

(6) **Omnipresent.** I Kings 8:27; Psalms 139:7-10; Acts 17:27.

(7) **Infinitely just; Psalms 89:14. Holy; Revelation 4:8. Good; Matthew 19:17.**

(8) **Eternal.** God has no beginning and no end. He *Is*. Psalms 102:27; I Timothy 1:17.

(9) **Unchangeable.** James 1:17.

(10) **Creator of all things.** Proverbs 16:4.

God conducts no experiments and makes no mistakes. His will is our correct standard of conduct.

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THE ETERNAL WORD

JOHN 1:1-14; MATTHEW 24:35

Two thousand years ago a little, old man sat in a cold, Roman dungeon writing. The government which imprisoned him ruled from India to Hispania; from the Sahara to Britain. The name of his executioner is forgotten. The prison where he was kept is in ruins, and that government has passed into history. But the words on that parchment where he was writing live on. *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”* Matthew 24:35.

Words are the signs of ideas; the index to man’s mind. God’s word gives God’s mind in human language. Jesus recognized the power of words. (Matthew 4:4-7; Mark 8:38; Luke 24:19). The cardinal sin of this age is disrespect for the written word of God.

I. The World was Created by God’s Word

Who am I? Whence came I? Whither go I? These are some of the most important questions ever asked. People sleeping in the dust of centuries have been disturbed by these questions. Libraries are filled with men’s attempts to answer these things.

Scientists and philosophers tell us how we operate, not from whence we came. Only God can do that. The Bible gives the cause of all things: John 1:1-3; Psalms 33:6-9; Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 148:1-6. There was no “spontaneous generation”. All life came from God.

II. The World is Sustained by the Word of God

The world is not operating by chance. (Hebrews 1:1-3). It was first destroyed by the flood. (II Peter 3:5-7; Genesis 6). It will next be destroyed by fire. (Matthew 3:11-12; II

Peter 3:11-12; II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

III. The Old Testament Miracles were by the Word of God.

Miracles are not natural but supernatural. God is all powerful. If man can make a submarine big enough to hold many men, it is reasonable to assume God could make a fish big enough to hold one man; if man can talk for hundreds of miles by means of the telephone, could not the God of the universe speak to His children by whatever means He chose. In Numbers 20:7-13, Moses used a rod as the emblem of God's word. In Joshua 10:12-13, Joshua demonstrated that all nature obeys the voice of God. Can God stop the universe? Yes! He even made the sun stand still. The power of faith was related by Christ in Matthew 17:20, when He said that faith as a grain of mustard seed could remove mountains. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing the word of God.

IV. Jesus was the Embodiment of God's Word.

God's word was made manifest to man through Jesus. (John 1:18; Colossians 1:15-17; I Timothy 3:16). Bethlehem was not the beginning for Christ.

V. Jesus Performed His Miracles by the Word.

All of the miracles of Jesus were performed through the power of the word of God. They include: feeding the multitude, Matthew 14:19, stilling the tempest, Matthew 8:26; healing the sick, Matthew 8:3-8; raising the dead, Luke 7:14; John 11:43.

VI. The Apostles Performed Miracles by the Word of God.

These included the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate, (Acts 3), and the healing of Aeneas at Lydda of

the palsy, (Acts 9:34).

VII. Where Is This Word Power Now?

John 16:5-15; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 1:6; Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 14:37; Revelation 22:18-19; John 20:30-31; I Peter 1:22-23; James 1:18. In every case of conversion, the gospel was preached. It is God's power unto salvation.

God's word cannot be resisted by material things. All nature obeys. Only man can resist, (Romans 13:2), or neglect salvation, (Hebrews 2:1-4). To resist the word is to resist the Spirit of God. (Acts 7:51).

Many years ago a man entered a bookstore in Pennsylvania operated by a skeptic and attempted to buy a Bible. The owner replied sarcastically that he did not have any Bibles and that in fifty years there wouldn't be any Bibles. The old Dutchman replied, "There will be Bibles a thousand years after you're dead and in hell." Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.*"

Poems: "Blessed Bible" and the "Anvil".

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FAITH

I. Introduction: What Is Faith?

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1). It takes in all past and all future. (Hebrews 11:13, 11:8).

Faith and belief are synonymous. (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible does not give technical definitions of many things, but rather examples, principles, and applications of them. Some of these include: faith, (Romans 4:3, 19-20); love, (I John 5:3); grace, (II Corinthians 8:9); religion, (James 1:27). Faith sometimes includes the whole Christian system. (Acts 6:7, Romans 1:5; 16:26). By these scriptures we see the force of faith. (John 3:16; Acts 16:31).

II. The Importance of Faith

1. **It is impossible to please God without it, even in a single act.** (Hebrews 11:6).
2. **We are children of God by faith.** (Galatians 3:26).
There is no salvation without it.
3. **We will be condemned without it.** (Mark 16:16; John 3:18).

III. How Does Faith Come?

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17).

1. **We have the word of faith.** (Romans 10:8; Acts 15:7; John 1:7, 20:31; II Thessalonians 1:10).
2. **Faith comes in no other way.** (Romans 10:14).
3. **There is a difference between faith and opinion.** No man can have faith on anything that God has not spoken about. John 8:6-8 tells us that Jesus wrote upon the ground. Wrote what? We do not know. No

man can believe why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. (John 3:1-5). The Bible does not say. Though we may have opinions on these matters, we can not have faith about them.

IV. How Many Faiths are There?—One. (Ephesians 4:4-5).

This one may be:

1. **Weak.** (Romans 4:19-20).
2. **Little.** (Matthew 6:30).
3. **Dead.** (James 2:17).
4. **Great.** (Matthew 8:10).

V. The Blessings of Faith—Mark 5:34

1. **We are purified by it.** (Acts 15:9).
2. **We are justified by it.** (Romans 5:1).
3. **We are saved through it.** (Ephesians 2:8).
4. **We are the children of God by it.** (Galatians 3:26).
5. **We are sanctified by it.** (Acts 26:18).
6. **We walk by it.** (II Corinthians 5:7).
7. **We live by it.** (Galatians 2:20).
8. **We are guarded by it.** (I Peter 1:5).
9. **The end of it is salvation.** (I Peter 1:9).

VI. When Does It Bless?

1. **When it leads to obedience.** (James 2:17-20).
2. **We walk in the steps of Abraham's faith.** (Romans 4:1-3).
3. **We become purified souls by obedience.** (I Peter 1:22).

REPENTANCE

I. Emphasized in the Scriptures

In Matthew 3:2, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judaea and saying, "*Repent ye . . .*". When John was in prison, Jesus preached, "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" In Matthew 10 and Luke 10, the twelve and the seventy were told to preach, "*Repent, for the kingdom is at hand.*"

The Great Commission mentions repentance. (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9; Luke 13:3).

It is easy to believe, confess, and be baptized. It is hard to repent. Repentance challenges man's will power. It is an inward change; a change of heart and life. Christ upbraided the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum because they repented not even though mighty works had been done in them. (Matthew 11:21).

II. What Is Repentance?

(1) **Repentance is not simply sorrow.** The people on Pentecost day who heard Peter preach were cut to the heart, yet told to repent.

(2) **It is not simply reformation.** This may be done for many reasons.

(3) **It is changing one's mind and actions to do the will of the Father.** In Matthew 21:28-29, we find an example of repentance. The father told the sons, "*Go work in my vineyard.*" One answered that he would not, but later repented and went. He turned, and changed his mind.

The Prodigal Son "*came to himself*" and changed his mind.

The men of Ninevah, (Matthew 12:41), "*shall rise in*

judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.” Jonah 3:10 states that they “*turned from their evil way.*”

Repentance is a change of mind, a change of will power produced by godly sorrow and bringing about a reformation of life.

III. Fruits of Repentance

Repentance brings about a change in the *actions* of people.

(1) **The sorcerers burned their books.** (Acts 19:19). They had been worth fifty thousand pieces of silver.

(2) **The Philippian jailer in Acts 16, washed the stripes of Paul and Silas.**

(3) **The Corinthians turned from their evil deeds** when rebuked by Paul.

IV. Why Repent?

(1) **Men repent because of godly sorrow.** II Corinthians 7:10.

(2) **Repentance comes because men fear God.** II Corinthians 5:10.

(3) **Repentance comes because of the goodness of God.** Romans 2:4. We enjoy His wonderful world. We see all that Christ has done. Some are not content with that however, and want God to do more. (Luke 16).

V. How Long Does It Take To Repent?

As long as it takes you to change your mind. Three thousand people repented on Pentecost day. Paul was in a penitent state for three days. In Luke 13:3, Jesus said, “*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

THE GOOD CONFESSION

I Timothy 6:12; Acts 8:37

The good confession is peculiar to the Church of Christ. We always have invitation songs and they are builded upon this confession. This is one of the acts of accepting Christ. It should be a high point in every man's life.

I. The Wonderful Meaning of this Confession

(1) **The most stupendous truth in the universe is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** Christ actually came to earth. None is profound enough to understand this truth, or simple enough to misunderstand. (I Timothy 3:16).

(2) **The confession is an acknowledgement that the sinner accepts Christ as Prophet, Priest and King.** The word confess means to "say after" and also to "surrender". Men do not like to surrender to authority and hence, do not like this confession.

(3) **The confession is public subscription to the creed of the church.** This creed is revealed in the Bible. The foundation of the church is this confession. (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 3:11). Many storms have beat upon this foundation, but it stands today.

(4) **It is a confession of faith;** not faith in oneself, his own opinions, nor in the doctrines of men, but in Christ and all that He says.

II. The Great and Solemn Dignity of the Confession

(1) **The great dignity of the confession comes from the great truth that it expresses.** We like to hear of great things and good things.

(2) **The confession derives dignity from the kind of people who have made it.** It was made at Christ's baptism,

Matthew 3:17; and again by God at the transfiguration in Matthew 17:5. It was made at the trial of Christ when He was before the high priest and Pilate, (Matthew 26:63), and by Peter in Matthew 16:16.

Stephen fell asleep with this confession on his lips, Acts 7:59-60. Timothy made this confession before many witnesses, I Timothy 6:12. Millions of Christians have made this confession; those burned in Rome and those whose blood ran red in the Colesium.

(3) The confession has dignity when we consider the cost to those making it.

Christ was killed for making it.

Peter died for making it; likewise all the apostles save John.

Nero's garden flamed with the living torches of those who made it.

The colesium ran red with the blood of those who made this confession.

The dark ages saw vile scoundrels seeking those who made it to kill them.

Today, sometimes men must leave home to make it. Many are ridiculed for making it. Denominations sometimes join hands with Nero by laughing at God's people for making this confession.

III. Scriptural Method of Making the Confession

(1) Confession is made with the mouth—not signing a card or holding up one's hand. (Romans 10:9-10).

(2) It is made before as many witnesses as possible. No cowards are wanted in the army of the Lord. It is no good to hold up your hand while the audience closes its eyes.

(3) Making the good confession helps us to be brave and to influence others.

IV. The Necessity of Making the Confession

(1) **This is one of the conditions of forgiveness.** Romans 10:9-10.

(2) **We will have to make it anyway some day.** Philipians 2:10.

(3) **Christ has promised that if we will confess Him here where He needs to be confessed, He will confess us at the judgement where we need to be confessed.** (Matthew 10:32-33). In ivory palaces where voices of angels sing, Christ will confess the name of every man who confesses His name here.

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THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

I. Introduction

Matthew 26:28—*“For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

Mark 14:24—*“And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.”*

Acts 20:28—*“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*

Romans 5:9—*“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”*

Ephesians 2:13—*“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”*

Hebrews 9:22—*“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”*

I Peter 1:19—*“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

I John 1:7—*“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

Revelation 7:14—*“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

II. Contact With the Blood

(1) Old Testament

Cain and Abel—Genesis 4.

Building the tabernacle—Exodus 26; dedicating the tabernacle and the book of the law with blood.

Passover—Exodus 12:13: *“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”*

(2) Old Testament Ended

Colossians 2:14—*“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”*

Hebrews 9:13-14—*“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

(3) New Testament

Hebrews 9:13f—The New Testament is a blood sealed book. When we keep the commandments in the New Testament we receive the benefit of Christ’s blood. That is how we come in contact with the blood today. A testament or will is of force *after* men are dead, hence, the New Testament came into force after the death of Christ.

Romans 6:3-4—We come into contact with the blood of Christ through baptism. We are washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Acts 20:28—The church was purchased with the blood of Christ. When we obey the gospel we become part of this blood bought institution. God adds us to the church after we do what he commanded us to do. (Acts 2:47).

I John 1:7—Every day, as much as in us is, we walk in the light of God’s word. We make mistakes. When we recognize them, we repent of them and ask God to forgive them. We even pray for forgiveness of the sins which we do not see. As Christians, we may receive *daily* cleansing with the blood of Christ to blot out our sins. Are *you* washed in the blood?

CONVERSION

ACTS 3:19

I. Introduction

The greatest event in the history of the world is the coming of Christ's religion. The rise and fall of empires, all the great wars and revolutions of the earth do not compare with it in scope. It spread from twelve men to 3,000 people in one day; then to 5,000; then to the Jewish world; then in 10 years to the Gentiles; and within 40 years it had been carried into all the known world. Considering that it was opposed by paganism, civil powers, money, political influence, Judaism, altars, temples, sacrifices and ancient customs, this growth is phenomenal. Having done away with all these doctrines of men, Christianity tells us there is only *one* way by which we may be saved. (Acts 4:12).

II. Discussion

Peter and John were going to the temple at the hour of prayer. They had a natural desire to tell people the news of Jesus. They were also divinely commanded to do so. (Mark 16:15-16).

A lame beggar lay at the gate asking alms of the people who entered the temple. Peter healed the man to show the divine power of Jesus and to attract the attention of the people so he could teach them.

(1) Peter's sermon pointed out the sinful nature of man. He commanded the people to repent. (Acts 3:19). Their hearts should become as those of little children. (Matthew 18:1-3). Becoming "*as a little child*" meant being no sinner.

(2) Peter told the people to repent and "be converted". To be converted means "*to turn*". How is this accomplished? It is not wholly an act of God or man, but of both. (John 3:

16; I Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:8-9). Man stands at the foot of the cross, lost and destitute. God tells man what to do; man does it, and God saves him.

(3) **Three changes must take place in order to be saved.** These are changes of the: heart, life, and relationship. These are made by faith, repentance, and baptism. (Galatians 3:26-27). When a man and a woman get married, the marriage ceremony does not make them love one another. They already love one another or they would not have wanted to marry. What the marriage ceremony does is change their *relationship* to one another.

When a man becomes a naturalized citizen of a country, the ceremony does not make him love that country. He already loves it or he would not want to be one of its citizens. What the ceremony does is change his *relationship* to the country. The change of heart in both cases took place *before* the ceremony, but the *benefits and blessings* of the new relationship came afterward. So it is with our conversion. We have a *change of heart* which leads us to *take action* to change our relationship to God.

(4) **How can we tell if we have correctly changed?**

When a boy has run away from home and has a change of heart, how can we tell it? Of course, when he comes home.

(5) **Adam and Eve heard, believed, and obeyed the serpent and fell into sin.** We must hear, believe, and obey the gospel in order to get out of our sins and into Christ. (Colossians 1:13-14). We are *translated* into the kingdom through the blood of Christ which forgives our sins.

III. Conclusion

Have *you* been converted?

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

I. Introduction

1. A study of the New Testament church is an appropriate subject because we know so little of the church today.

2. The word church has no religious significance. It means "*the called out*" and can refer to any selected body.

a. The church is not a meeting house. (Acts 7:48; Acts 17:24).

b. Yet the church is a house. (Hebrews 3:6; I Peter 2:5). It is a spiritual house. (I Timothy 3:15).

3. There is a general and local use of the word church in the Bible. The *general* use refers to all the Christians in the whole world. The *local* use of the word refers to one congregation only. The word is used locally, 92 times and in the general sense, 18 times in the New Testament.

II. Discussion

1. When did the church begin? (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4; 11:15). A church beginning at another time is not the New Testament church. The church began on Pentecost Day of Acts 2.

2. Where did the New Testament church begin? (Isaiah 2:1-2; Zechariah 1:16). One beginning at another place cannot be the Lord's church.

3. Who started the New Testament church? (Matthew 16:18). One started by someone else could not be the Lord's church.

4. What is its foundation? (Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20).

5. Is it a denomination?

a. If so, which one? There is some scrap heap from which to choose.

b. A denomination is larger than a church in the *local* sense, and smaller than a church in the *general* sense, therefore it could not be a church in the *Biblical* sense.

6. The essentiality of the church.

a. The church is the body of Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

b. Christ is the savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23).

c. The church is bought with the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28). We must be in the thing that was bought.

d. The blood is in the body—we must get into the body in order to come in contact with the blood. If the church is nothing, try substituting the word “*nothing*” in place of the church. (Matthew 16:18 et al).

7. Conditions of membership.

a. These are the same as becoming a Christian.

b. It is impossible to “join” the church. (Acts 2:47).

III. Conclusion

This is to be a glorious church to be presented to the Father. Christ comes for His own—not some other church.

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GOD'S UNITY PLATFORM EPHESIANS 4:3-6

Unity of the Spirit is that unity into which the Spirit leads. (Romans 8:14; II Samuel 23:2; Revelation 2:7; Acts 1:16). Our Savior prayed for unity. (John 17:20-21; Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 1:10). God presents a seven point unity platform.

I. One God . . . Our Father.

(1) The atheist must accept this or there can be no unity. (Psalms 14:1; Hebrews 3:4). A house proclaims its builder just as the universe proclaims that it had a builder.

(2) Idolators must accept this or there can be no unity. We must be very well united on this. Try: "One God is just as good as another". or "Take the God of your choice."

II. One Lord . . . Our Savior.

(1) Christ. (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:11).

(2) All authority. (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:22; Matthew 17:5; I Corinthians 1:10-14; John 10:16). Christ is not divided. Try: "Take the Christ of your choice."

III. One Spirit . . . Our Teacher.

(John 16:13; John 14:26). He leads all alike. (Romans 8:14; Ephesians 4:3-6).

IV. One Faith . . . Faith of the Gospel.

(Ephesians 4:5; Philippians 1:27; I Corinthians 16:13). We walk in the light of the gospel and have fellowship with one another. (I John 1:7). We have no right to the faith of our choice. To accept this faith is to accept the word of God; no more and no less. (Romans 10:17; Acts 27:25). We

must obey in order to be saved. (Galatians 5:6; Romans 16:26; Romans 6:17-18).

V. One Baptism . . . Ephesians 4:5.

There used to be others (under the Old Testament), there is going to be one more (the baptism of fire), but now there *is* one. (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; John 14:26).

Water baptism is for all nations. (Matthew 28:19-20). It is for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). It is a burial. (Romans 6:4). There is no choice; there is only one.

VI. One Body . . . The Church

(Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 12:20; Colossians 3:15; Romans 2:4-5; Colossians 1:18, 24; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). “*By one Spirit* (his teaching) *are we all baptized into one body.*” (I Corinthians 12:13). We are reconciled or saved in the body. (Ephesians 2:16). The body is connected with the head. (Colossians 1:18). The church includes all who obey the gospel. (Acts 2:36-37). There is no church of your choice. If there is only one God, then there is only one church. It can be identified by its name, origin, doctrine, and practice.

VII. One Hope . . . Life beyond the grave, in Heaven.

(Colossians 1:5-7; 23). We should always be ready to give a reason for our hope. (I Peter 3:15).

This is God’s unity platform. If men will agree on these seven points, there is but little left to argue about.

COUNTERFEITING

Counterfeiting is one of the most profitable and widespread forms of lawlessness. Government spends large sums of money to catch counterfeiters. Every coin is either genuine or counterfeit. If it is almost like it, it is still counterfeit. The more nearly alike it is, the more dangerous the counterfeit.

All good things are counterfeited. This holds true in the natural world and in the spiritual world. God warns against counterfeits. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thessalonians 5:21).

I. Counterfeit gods

1. *Idolatry was a common sin of Israel.*

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . ." (Exodus 20:3-5).

2. *Men today:* Today men do not make metal (or stone) images but mental images. Some worship a god of sentiment. "Behold the goodness and severity of God." (Romans 11:22).

Covetousness is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5).

Pleasure may become a counterfeit or false god.

"Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Paul gives characteristics of the true God. (Acts 17:24-28).

II. Counterfeit Christs

1. *False Christs*—deceive very elect. (Matthew 24:24-25)

2. *God manifest in flesh.* (Hebrews 4:15) —tempted in all

points like we are tempted. He has all authority—Matthew 28:19. He is king—Revelation 19:16.

III. Counterfeit Prophets

1. *“Beware of false prophets”*, —Matthew 7:15.
2. *Paul*—I Corinthians 14:37.
3. *The Bible is God’s yardstick*—a standard against which to measure.

IV. Counterfeit Teachers

1. *“Privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord . . .”*, II Peter 2:1-2.
2. *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”*—I Peter 4:11. Apply this test to every teacher.
3. *Bereans* were more noble than they of Thessalonica because they searched the scriptures *to see if* things taught were the truth—Acts 17:11.

V. Counterfeit Gospels

1. *“If any man preach any other gospel . . .”*, Galatians 1:6-9.
2. *Certified gospel*. Galatians 1:11.
3. *This gospel is sealed by the Holy Spirit*. No other is correct.

VI. Counterfeit Faith

1. *Genuine faith . . .* Romans 10:17.
2. *Counterfeit preaching will produce counterfeit faith*. *“If Christ be not raised . . . our faith is vain.”* I Corinthians 15:12.
3. *Trial of your faith . . .* I Peter 1:7. Gold is tried in the fire and purified.
4. *They that live godly will suffer persecution*. II Timo-

thy 3:12.

VII. Counterfeit Christians

1. *"In peril among false brethren . . . "*. II Corinthians 11:26.
2. *"Brought in unawares . . ."*. Galatians 2:4.
3. *Still happens today.* Paul gave place, no not for an hour that the truth of the gospel might continue. Galatians 2:5.

VIII. Counterfeit Peace, Happiness, Security

1. *Men cry peace when there is no peace.* Jeremiah 6:14.
2. *"Peace I leave with you . . . not as the world giveth."* John 14:27. Christ is the prince of peace. Luke 2:14.
3. *Individual security . . . examine self.* I Corinthians 11:7. In faith? II Corinthians 13:5. May deceive self. James 2:26.
4. *"Dead while she liveth,"* I Timothy 5:6.
5. Oil field in Oklahoma: fumes killed while people slept.
6. *Rich fool.* Thought he was happy, secure. Luke 12:16-21.

IX. How to Detect a Counterfeit

1. *Study the genuine article.*

X. Only Valuable Things Counterfeited

Men do not counterfeit things of no value. Is your religion counterfeit? Can you say with Paul . . . II Timothy 1:12.

THE CONTRIBUTION

I. Introduction

Many are reluctant to preach on this subject. Out of 500 sermons, only short sketches were found on this subject. Many fear that the members will say they are “preaching for money”. In contrast, there is an abundance of material on this subject in the Bible. There is almost as much as on faith, repentance, confession and baptism. Covetousness and stinginess are condemned along with fornicators, idolators, railers, drunkards, and extortioners. We are told to “put away that wicked person”.

II. Bible Examples given to teach the truth.

1. **Abraham** gave tithes to Melchizedek. (Genesis 14:8-20). We are of that priesthood. (Hebrews 5:5-10: 7: 1-17).
2. **Jacob's vow.** (Genesis 28:20-22).
3. **Israel.** (Genesis 35:4-10).
4. **Wise men.** (Matthew 2:11).
5. **Widow.** (Mark 12:41-44).
6. **Zacchaeus.** (Luke 19:8-9).
7. **Jerusalem church.** (Acts 2:44-45).
8. **Ananias and Sapphira.** (Acts 5:1-11).

III. New Testament teaching about giving.

1. **Stewardship.** (Luke 16:1-13; I Corinthians 4:1-2; I Corinthians 10:26).
2. **Cheerfully, freely, humbly.** (II Corinthians 9:6-7).
3. **Equality in giving.** (II Corinthians 8:11-14; I Corinthians 9:7-10).
4. **New Testament plan.** (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Periodic, personal, provident, proportionate, preventive.

IV. We will prosper for giving.

1. **If we sow sparingly we shall reap sparingly.** (II Corinthians 9:6).
2. **We shall receive an hundredfold.** (Mark 10:28-30; Matthew 19:29).
3. **Will a man rob God?** (Malachi 3:8).
4. **Sick sheep offerings.** (Malachi 1:8).
5. **Cast thy bread upon the waters . . . gather it up.**

V. Every member ought to work out his own bookkeeping system and give a certain percent of his income.

1. **There are two kinds of members:** the cloud and the sponge. The cloud gives off and the sponge soaks up. A dangerous spiritual disease is rheumatism of the heart caused by contraction of the wallet.
2. **Many are afraid of the contribution.** Sometimes people are reluctant to mention it. Few churches ever gave themselves to death.

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SALVATION BY GRACE

Ephesians 2:1-10

I. Introduction

There is no theme in which man should be more interested than the grace of God. Grace means “*favor*”. All of life is an expression of God’s grace toward us: in the material world this includes sunshine, rain, food, water—everything.

It is the grace of God in the spiritual realm about which we want to speak. Man is saved by grace. The scripture read declares this fact. Many others teach the same thing. Without God’s grace you and I would be lost. We can never thank God enough for His grace.

II. Discussion

1. “By grace—through Faith”.

No one who believes the Bible questions that we are saved by grace. But in thinking of how to be saved we must consider more than grace. If all to whom God’s grace appears will be saved, then none would be lost. “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*” (Titus 2: 11). The grace that brings salvation hath appeared to all men—not the grace that brings material things, but salvation! Yet many will be lost.

Mark 16:16—“*He that believeth not shall be damned.*” Man’s faith has something to do with his salvation. Our text (Ephesians 2:8-9) says we are saved by *grace through faith*.

2. **There are two sides to the plan of salvation: Grace and Faith.** Grace covers everything God has done for us. Faith covers everything man must do to be saved. Examples: water quenches thirst, but we must drink it; food sustains the body, but we must eat it. We may pray “*Give us this day our daily bread*” and starve while doing it. Bread is God’s gift

but we must work for it.

God's grace is for all. God's part is perfectly done. All the failures are on man's part. We reach God's saving grace through faith. What kind of faith? Not dead faith. James tells us, "*Faith without works is dead being alone.*" (James 2:17). John 12:42 tells of many of the chief rulers of the synagogue in Jesus' time who believed, but would not confess Him. They loved the praise of man more than the praise of God. They believed, but were not saved. James says the devils believe (James 2:19). What kind of faith saves? Paul tells us in Galatians 5:6 that the faith that avails "*works by love*". It is a living, working faith that brings us into the grace of God that saves. "Man must exercise faith and the faith must exercise the man." The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

3. How the Ephesians were Saved

We do not need to guess at how men are saved by grace through faith. The Ephesians are a living demonstration of that. It was to the Ephesians that Paul wrote Ephesians 2:8-9. If we learn what the Ephesians did to be saved by grace, that will be what we need to do today.

(1) People at Ephesus hear the gospel. (Ephesians 1:13).

To be saved by grace through faith, one must therefore, hear the gospel.

(2) Ephesians believed in Christ. (Ephesians 1:13).

(3) Ephesians repented. (Acts 20:21). Paul, in explaining to the elders about his work said, "*Testifying both to the Jews and the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" In being saved by grace one must repent.

(4) The Ephesians confessed. (Acts 19:18). "*Many who believed came and confessed.*" In being saved by grace through faith confession is made.

(5) The Ephesians were baptized. (Acts 19:5). Paul, in telling of the first converts in Ephesus, said they “*were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” To these same people Paul said, “*One Lord, one faith and one baptism.*” (Ephesians 4:5).

God’s word tells us that the Ephesians were saved by grace through faith. It tells us what the Ephesians did: they heard, they believed, they repented, they confessed their faith in Christ, and they were baptized. If a man will do the same things today, he can be saved by grace through faith. God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34). He will do for us what He did for them.

4. Grace teaches

“*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.*” (Titus 2:11-12). God’s grace teaches us—
—How?

5. Grace and Gospel

God’s grace teaches through the gospel. Whatever the Bible ascribes to grace, it also ascribes to the gospel. Whatever the Bible says about grace, it also says about gospel.

Ephesians 2:5 – saved by grace.

Romans 5:2 – we stand in grace.

Acts 20:32 – word of His grace.

Titus 2:11 – grace appeared to all men.

I Corinthians 15:2 – saved by the gospel.

I Corinthians 15:1 – we stand in the gospel.

Acts 15:7 – word of the gospel.

Colossians 1:23 – gospel preached to all men.

Galatians 1:6 uses the words *grace* and *gospel* synonymously . . . “*moved from the grace of Christ unto another gospel.*” Men are saved by grace when they accept the gospel

message by faith.

6. Grace and Truth

“The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17). The gospel is truth. Grace is carried to men through the truth of the gospel. We are saved by Christ’s life (Romans 5:10). We learn of His life in the gospel. We are saved by the death of Christ. (Romans 5:8). We learn of His death in the gospel. It is through the gospel that we learn of His blood. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (I Corinthians 1:21). The curse of heaven rests on anyone who preaches another gospel. (Galatians 1:6-7). God’s grace is revealed through the preaching of His gospel.

7. Not man’s righteousness

We are not saved by our own righteousness. We cannot earn or merit salvation. To do what God commands is not to trust our own righteousness. To believe is a work of God. (John 6:29). Believing is an *act* of man but a *work* of God. So it is with everything God has commanded. To obey God’s commandments is not to trust our own righteousness, but to trust God’s righteousness.

III. Conclusion

“The Spirit and the bride say come . . . whosoever will let him come.” (Revelation 22:17).

“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found—
Was blind, but now I see.”

†††

WHY SEND FOR PETER? ACTS 11:13-14

Our Lord has said, “*Take heed how ye hear*” and “*Take heed what ye hear.*” This is a mutual responsibility for both the listener and the speaker.

We consider now the conversion of Cornelius, the Roman soldier. “*Send men to Joppa, and call for Simòn, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*” Acts 10 records these events in a general outline. Acts 11 records them in order.

I. The Gospel To The Gentiles

There were no Gentiles in the church during its first ten years of existence. The great commission of Matthew 28:19 was clear, but it had not been understood. Even Mark 16:15 was not understood. It took a series of miracles to convince the Jews and the apostles that the gospel should go to the Gentiles. These miracles were not part of anyone’s conversion—if ever the Holy Spirit operated without the Word of God to save anyone, this should have been the time. Cornelius wanted to be saved. No one wanted to preach the truth to him. God’s plan was that the truth be preached—not that he be miraculously saved.

II. Character Does Not Save

If character saves a man, then Cornelius did not need anything. Notice the character sketch given of him in Acts 10:1-2.

- (1) **He was a devout man.** He feared God with all his house, gave much alms, and prayed to God always. He was morally devout, religious, benevolent, and

prayed—yet he was lost!

- (2) **“Send to Joppa, call for Peter . . . who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”**
- (3) **The prevalent worldly idea that being a “good man” will save one is simply false.** There is no man in this city today better than Cornelius was, but it simply takes more than mere goodness to be saved.

III. Sending For Peter

- (1) **An angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter.** The New Testament did not then exist. The angel only told him where to receive the truth. We hear no more of the angel. Why did the angel not tell him what to do? Because it was not God’s plan. God’s law is unchangable. Cornelius must send for Peter.
- (2) **The scene shifts to Joppa where Peter is praying.** A vision presents all kinds of animals. This miracle is to convince Peter that he ought to go to the Gentiles.
- (3) **Peter returns to Ceasarea with six brethren.** Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet to worship. This showed his humility, but Peter took him up. He said, *“Stand up; I myself also am a man.”* This shows that Peter was not a Pope, and did not consider himself a personage to be worshipped.
- (4) **Three miracles have taken place and Cornelius is still lost.** The third miracle was when the Holy Spirit fell on the company.

IV. When The Spirit Fell

Cornelius believed by hearing the word. (Acts 15:7). Peter’s mouth moved and spoke; they heard and believed.

When did the Spirit fall? “*As I began to speak.*” (Acts 11:15). Not afterward, or in the middle, but at the beginning. The Spirit fell *before* Cornelius heard the word, and *before* he was saved.

V. Why The Spirit Fell

The Spirit fell not to benefit Cornelius, but to prove to the Jews present and to the whole Jewish church that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well. “*Fell on us as at the beginning.*” Why go back to Pentecost? Because there was no other case of this happening. (See Acts 15:17-18). Peter used this incident to show that God intended that the Gentiles should have the gospel. (Acts 11:17-18).

VI. The Word Whereby

Acts 11:14. Peter simply preached the great commission. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47. The gospel was to go to the Gentiles. Romans 1:15-16. The message was simple. It included:

- (1) **Faith**, Acts 15:7.
- (2) **Repentance**, Acts 11:18.
- (3) **Baptism in the name of Christ**, Acts 10:48. (See Acts 2:38. There is only one baptism—that of the great commission. Why send for Peter? To learn what to do to be saved?)

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THREE CHAPTERS IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION JOHN 3:16

John 3:16 is often called the Golden Text of the Bible. It is quoted more times than any other verse. The entire plan of redemption is suggested here. There are three views: (1) Divine, (2) Divine-Human, (3) Human. Salvation must be viewed from all three angles.

THE DIVINE CHAPTER

Only God can save from sin. *"We trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe."* (I Timothy 4:10).

Grace and Mercy

Sin is a disease for which there is no human remedy. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done but by His own mercy He saved us."* (Titus 3:5). *"The wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23). Universal death was the demand of absolute justice. Mercy intervened. *"Justified freely by his grace."* (Romans 3:24). The grace of God *"bringeth salvation."* (Titus 2:11). Sins committed cannot be uncommitted or undone. Words said cannot be unsaid. The past cannot be relived. The door of every man's past is locked and he has no key. If he is ever to be saved at all, it must be by forgiveness. Grace supplies the way to "the land of beginning again." A debt which cannot be paid never will be paid unless it is forgiven. Man is unable to pay his debt of sin. By grace he may be forgiven.

Grace and Gospel

Through His grace God has given His word. God's grace *"hath appeared to all men, teaching . . ."* (Titus 2:11-12). God's grace comes through teaching. Paul uses the terms **grace** and **gospel** synonymously as in Galatians 1. So

far as salvation is concerned, those things ascribed to grace are also ascribed to gospel. Whatever grace is said to do, the gospel is said to do.

Grace saves. (Ephesians 2:5). **Gospel saves.** (I Corinthians 15:2).

We stand in grace. (Romans 5:2). **We stand in the Gospel.** (I Corinthians 15:2).

Word of grace. (Acts 20:32). **Word of gospel.** (Acts 15:7). Grace is thus revealed through His gospel. God hath spoken. (Hebrews 1:1).

God So Loved

If we were to try to count the things God has done for us, the list would prove endless. The Bible states not that God *shows* love or *possesses* love, but that "*God is love.*" (I John 4:8). No one can measure the length, breadth, depth and height of God's love. It reaches to infinity. (Romans 8:35-39). No one can describe it. (Romans 11:33-36). God first loved us. (I John 4:19).

THE DIVINE-HUMAN CHAPTER

The supreme manifestation of His grace, the broadest application of His mercy, and the highest example of His goodness is seen in the giving of His son. Here we see a human and divine agency. "*In the beginning He was God.*" (John 1:1). "*He was made flesh and dwelt among us . . .*" (John 1:14). God announced Christ to be His son. (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

Christ was a mediator between God and man. (I Timothy 2:5). A mediator must be equally related to both parties. Christ was both the Son of God and the "Son of Man". (Matthew 8:20).

He was in the form of God, but He took the form of man. (Phillipians 2). At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee

as a man He attended the feast. As God, He changed the water into wine. (John 2). As a man, he hungered. (John 4: 6-8). As God He fed the multitude. (Mark 6:41). At the tomb of Lazarus, as a man he wept over the death of his friend. As God, He raised Lazarus from the dead. (John 11). As a man He prayed, "*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*" (Matthew 26:39). As God, He could have called for legions of angels. (Matthew 26:53). As a man, he died and was buried in Joseph's new tomb. (Matthew 27:58-60). As God, He came forth from the tomb victor over death, hell, and the grave.

God saves, but Jesus saves: (Matthew 1:21); by His name, (Acts 4:12); by His life, (Romans 5:10); by His death and cross, (Romans 5:10); by His resurrection, (Romans 4: 25); by His gospel, (I Corinthians 15:1-2); by His church, (Ephesians 5:23). As our high priest he ever lives to make intercession for us, (Hebrews 7:25).

Prophet and Priest

A prophet speaks for God. A priest mediates for man. Christ is our prophet and priest. He is *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities. (Hebrews 4:15).

Salvation in Christ

Christ learned obedience, (Hebrews 5:8-9). He is the perfect mediator, (I Timothy 2:5). God reconciled the world unto Himself through Christ, (II Corinthians 5:17-19). We approach God only through Christ, (John 14:6). If salvation depended on the Lord alone, all would be saved, (II Peter 3: 9). If on Christ alone, all would be saved, (Hebrews 2:9). Man must do his part.

THE HUMAN CHAPTER

We are commanded to do something in order to receive salvation. "*Work out your own salvation with fear and*

trembling.” (Phillipians 2:12; Acts 2:40).

Hearing . . . (John 6:44-45).

Believing . . . (Hebrews 11:6).

Repenting . . . (Luke 13:3).

Confessing . . . (Matthew 10:32).

Baptism . . . (I Peter 3:21).

Faith that works by love . . . (Galatians 5:6).

Adding Christian graces . . . (II Peter 1:5-11).

This, then, is a three-fold look at the plan of salvation: what **God** has done for us, what **Christ** has done and is doing for us, and what God has commanded us to do.

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BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT

Numbers 32:23

I. The Setting

The men of the tribes of Gad and Reuben wanted the fine prairie land east of the Jordan River for their flocks and herds. They promised faithfully that if they were given this land that the men of their tribes would go over the Jordan and help drive out the inhabitants of Canaan until all the tribes would have their inheritance. Moses agreed, but said, *“But if you will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”* Notice he did not say, “Be sure people will find out about your sin,” but “Be sure your sin will find *you* out.”

II. God will see to it that sin will be brought to judgement.

It is part of the nature of God to demand that sin be exposed and punished. If one sin in all the universe can get by then God has failed and the devil has succeeded. As certain as it is that there is a God, is the certainty that sin will be exposed, judged and punished.

God has sown into all created things a demand for retribution for sin. When Cain killed Abel, God said, *“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”* (Genesis 4:10). Cain was cursed from the earth. The blood itself cried out for punishment upon Cain. God said, *“When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”*

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of an ass, some of the Pharisees from among the rejoicing multitude said, *“Master, rebuke thy disciples.”* (Luke 19:39). Jesus answered them saying, *“I tell you that, if these should hold*

their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40). The ground, the very stones, the whole creation of God is set to see that sin is brought to judgement. It cannot be meaningless that the sun turned to darkness during the crucifixion, or that in Egypt the water turned to blood, or that earthquakes, storm and physical disturbances increase as long as man dwells in wickedness on earth. It is a law of God, it is a law of nature that your sin will find you out. "*Be sure your sin will find you out.*"

(1) Nothing is more clearly taught in God's word:

"The way of transgressors is hard." (Proverbs 13:15).

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7).

"For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23).

"For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

(2) Outside the Bible experience on every hand teaches this fact. Sin has a way of coming to light. "Murder will out." "The mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine." Criminologists agree there is no such thing as a "perfect crime". Some clue is left by which the criminal is found out. Some cases are never solved because men are imperfect but inherent in man are certain tendencies which inevitably point out the crime—a fingerprint, an observer, a guilty conscience, or some circumstantial evidence. As surely as God is in heaven, sin will find the sinner and will be found out. The sinner's own conscience joins in the chase like bloodhounds tracking down a guilty convict. "*Be sure your sin will find you out.*"

III. Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out

(1) **Sin will find you out in your face.** It leaves a slimy, hated, disfiguring trail. Sin marks and brands. Sin cannot be hidden behind a mask.

“You don’t have to tell how you live each day,
 You don’t have to say if you work or play,
 For a tried true barometer stands in its place;
 However you live, it shows on your face.

“The envy and hatred you bear in your heart,
 Does not stay inside where it first got its start;
 For sinew and blood are a thin veil of lace,
 What you bear in your heart you show on your face.

“If you gambled and won in the great game of life,
 If you feel you have conquered both sorrow and strife,
 If you played the game fair, and stand on first base,
 You don’t have to tell folks, it shows on your face.

“If your life is unselfish, if for others you live,
 Not for what you can get, but for what you can give,
 If you live close to God in His infinite grace—
 You don’t have to tell it. It shows on your face.”

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies.” “Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true . . . think on these things.”

See the glassy eye and poker face of the gambler (and some bankers!), the set smile and effusive talk of the politician, the false smile of the actor, the coarsened and reddened features of the drunkard, the morose countenance of the chronic grumbler—it shows in their faces. Sin leaves its mark. Do not think you can get by. Your sin will find you out.

(2) **Sin will find you out in your body.** In your own

body you will reap what you sow. How hardened, how blind are those who sin. To Eve, God said, *"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."* (Genesis 3:16). It is no doubt that because of sin the race has been cut down from several hundred years to three score and ten.

A grumbling, ungrateful, critical disposition may lead to indigestion, ulcers and more serious diseases. Maybe you think you can get by with sin. You think you may do the devil's work without collecting his wages. You think you will sin for awhile and then turn away and feel no evil effects. I warn you by the authority of God, your sin will find you out . . . in your body.

(3) Sin will find you out in your character. Sin does not stop in your face and body. It becomes a part of your character. The worst thing about drinking is not weakening your resistance, injuring your lungs, hardening your liver or damaging your brain. The man who drinks is not the same again. It takes hold of his character. It weakens his will power. The "track" is made. He is likely to seek the company of drinkers and of liquor. One who commits adultery loses something. His character is not the same. Those who engage in illicit sexual pleasure damage their characters. One who steals or gambles coarsens his moral fiber. The honest man becomes a thief. The man who sins is a sinner when it is over. Sin blights your character.

(4) Sin will find you out in your children. *"I the Lord am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."* (Exodus 20:5). The innocent often suffer with the guilty. When fathers sin, children not only suffer, but often follow them into sin. Amnon, David's young son, was a wild and reckless fellow. He was influenced by his father's sin. He

loved his half-sister, Tamar. On the pretext of sickness, he had her come to his room where he ravished her. She went home weeping. Absalom loved her and took her to his home. One day at a banquet for the king's sons, he gave the word that Amnon was to be killed. The young prince who raped his own half-sister was killed. David was not yet done with his terrible sin. Absalom was killed. David climbed the steps of his tower crying, "*O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*" Sin does not pay. It will show up in your children.

I watched the doctor putting drops in the eyes of my firstborn and I asked him why. He said that, "Sixty percent of those blind from birth are infected by the mother with venereal disease on account of the sins of the father or the mother or both. This is done with all newborns to protect them." Sin is always terrible, but most terrible of all when it blinds innocent children. The sin over which you grieve will affect others.

(5) Sin will find you out in a remorse stricken conscience. Men may laugh at their mother's prayers, curse in the faces of their wives, and scoff at heaven and the gospel. Some seem to have no conscience left, but that little spark of celestial fire will burn—and how it will burn.

(6) Sin will find you out in the judgement and in hell. Some sins will never be known here. What shows in the face, the body, the character, the children, is not all—we shall all stand before God in judgement. "*For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.*" (II Corinthians 5:10, Cf. Matthew 25). The books will be opened and all secret things will be revealed. Sin will find us out.

IV. A Note of Hope

(1) Moses raised the brazen serpent in the wilderness. He told the people to look on it and live. Christ makes us free from our sins. (II Corinthians 5:21). He was our substitute.

(2) With David and Paul we may say, "*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven; whose sins are covered.*" (Psalms 32:1-2; Romans 4:7-8). Christ has carried my sins. He was stripped, tormented and killed, for me.

There was a time when the hounds of hell brayed on my heels. I was a sinner—lost. Justice would not do me any good. I needed mercy. I ran to Christ as my refuge. Of him Isaiah said, "*And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*" (Isaiah 32:2). Christ is our refuge, our rock in a weary land.

V. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). The Bible is full of promises and invitations. When sin smote Eden, God came walking and said, "*Where art thou?*" From that day to this God has been pleading with sinners.

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isaiah 55:1-2).

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:22).

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." (Ezekiel 33:11).

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37). *"Suffer the little children to come unto me,*

and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 18:16). *“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”* (Revelation 21:6).

But the sweetest invitation of all is that of our Lord in Matthew 11:28-30.

Sinner, it is your move. No sinner is ever saved until he moves toward God. The prodigal son arose and went to his father. Salvation means going to Christ. He said, *“My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Jesus felt the pinch of poverty. He was born in a borrowed stable, laid in a borrowed manger, and buried in a borrowed tomb. *“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”* (Luke 9:58). He calls poor people to him. He had no money to pay his taxes. When he died he had only a seamless garment—doubtless given to Him.

Jesus labored. He was a carpenter. (Mark 6:3). How common to man is labor! *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus was hungry. He was tormented by betraying friends, the doubts of His own family, and the jeers of the townspeople where He grew up. Oppression, temptation, trouble, labor, and sorrow—no sinner ever suffered more. He took our place and died for us. He was tempted in all points like we are tempted. He understands.

(1) **Rest.** Many caskets have “At Rest” on them. The poor, sad, wicked world does not give rest. Why are there so many thousands of suicides each year? Why are thousands insane? Because they can find no rest. Why is nervous prostration so common? Why are people finding fault? Our forefathers slept on shucks and straw; we sleep on Beautyrest

mattresses and still cannot find rest. We have fixed the mattress, but not the tormenting conscience. *“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”* (Isaiah 57:21).

Men think that money will give rest. It only chains and enslaves. Most of the friends of wealthy people seek their money, not their friendship. Many a man has thought that the love of a godly woman will bring rest—ah, we need the love of father, mother, son, daughter, or sweetheart, but they will not bring peace. Take your burdens to Christ.

(2) **Judgement.** *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (Hebrews 10:31). *“Our God is a consuming fire.”* (Hebrews 12:29). It is a fearful thing to stand before God with the book opened and our sins exposed to all. Jesus will be the great avenger.

Now He is the meek and lowly one offering forgiveness. God will forgive all sins and carry every burden. A lifetime of service to Him can be wonderful. How about you?

†††

SAMUEL WHO PREACHED FROM THE GRAVE I SAMUEL 28:11

No witch's scene from Shakespeare can surpass this one. Saul had been a great soldier and a great king. He came now to his last battle. Haggard, and haunted with fear, he stood atop Mount Gilboa and saw the Philistine campfires in the most fought over valley on earth—Esdraelon.

Saul felt the need of a higher power. He inquired of the Lord what he should do. There was no answer and no prophet. Samuel was dead. Urim and Thummin gave no answer. He decided to consult a necromancer. Saul had put these people out of the land and announced the penalty for such witchcraft as death. Still, his servants found a witch at Endor, 5 miles away from Nazareth, and Saul went there in disguise. He asked the woman to call up Samuel. Samuel had anointed **Saul**, pleaded with him, warned him, and prayed with him. He now needed his advice. He asked the witch to "*Bring up Samuel.*"

God answered Saul's request. The witch was terribly surprised. Samuel appeared before her and preached from the grave. It is the only time in the history of the world that this has happened. (Luke 16). Samuel told Saul, "*Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.*"

Let us call up Samuel to preach to us today—not by a witch's wand, but from the sacred pages of God's word.

I. Samuel and a godly mother

Samuel's mother, Hannah, prayed for a child. She promised that the child would be "*lent unto the Lord.*" The ancestors of great men are important. One cannot gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. Greatness is directly traceable to the right kind of parents. Biblical examples of

this abound: John the Baptist, Timothy, Manoah and his wife asking how to train Samson. Abraham Lincoln's mother called him into the cabin at Centerville, Indiana, just before she died to advise him what kind of man to become. Grover Cleveland attributed his success to his mother. James A. Garfield thanked his mother for making him what he was. Dr. McCosk, of Princeton University, prayed with each senior as they left the school. One boy refused, but returned years later and asked for that prayer.

II. Samuel's call

God called men in different ways: Abraham; Gideon and the fleece; Moses and the burning bush; Isaiah and the Lord high and mighty; Paul and the great light; Samuel in Shiloh's house. A voice called to Samuel in the night. This was a severe test of the boy. He was to tell Eli and his family that they were rejected. Samuel, "*told him every word and hid not a word from him.*" We need preachers today with the courage of that child. There are sweet sayings and there are hard ones. Samuel's last sermon from the grave is a hard one. "*Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.*"

III. Samuel and adversity

Samuel teaches us how to carry ourselves in adversity. Just as a coin worn slick can be read when heated, so adversity brings out character and lets us read the inscription of the soul. Adversity reveals Samuel.

He was an illustrious character who had a great career. A delegation waited on him. They said, "*Behold, thou art old . . . give us a king.*" Another cross he had to bear was that his, "*sons walk not in thy ways.*" Many godly men have borne this cross.

Samuel did nothing little or mean. He made his valedic-

tory speech—like Paul’s speech to the elders at Ephesus or Joshua’s speech to Israel—and challenged them to find a dishonorable act in his whole life. He reminded them of the mercies of God. He did not chide or rebuke. He said, “*I will pray for you.*”

IV. Samuel as God’s mouthpiece

God called Samuel to be the messenger to tell Saul he was selected king. He calls us to do our duty.

Saul had great possibilities. How sad to read, “*He fell on his sword.*” He failed and came short. Many do today.

Samuel pleaded with Saul and warned Saul. What a picture of gospel preachers warning us today. Samuel did not want to give Saul up.

There was a final break. It is a sad scene. “*And Samuel came no more.*” No more visits, no more warnings, and no more prayers. Saul had sinned away his day of grace. Samuel came no more.

Samuel lives now. Has God called you? Are you resisting? Have you tasted the good word of God and turned away from it? Mighty Samuel preaches to us now through the power of a mother’s prayer, the possibility of being great. That opportunity eventually comes to an end. The time is now. Sleep on Samuel, we have your message.

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WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE IN HEAVEN? Revelation 21; II Corinthians 12:1-4

I. Introduction

God is a *real* person. Satan is a *person*. Hell is an actual *place*—not a condition of the soul. To deny these truths is a form of atheism. (John 14:1-4; Psalms 24; II Corinthians 12:2; Revelation 12:7-8). What is it like over there?

II. Discussion

A. Paul's experience in heaven is related in II Corinthians 12:1-4. Why? It was not to make him any more of an apostle, not to encourage anyone, but to teach us. The Jews spoke of three heavens: the first heaven where the birds fly, the second heaven where the sun, moon, stars and planets were, and the third heaven which was the holy habitation of God. When Paul preached at Lystra, he was stoned, dragged out of the city, thrown out on the trash heap and left for dead. He most probably was dead. He miraculously recovered and relates this experience. He did not know if he was in the body or out of the body—probably out—but it makes no difference.

1. **Refutes materialism.** The soul is separate from the body. He saw, heard, and realized—all when he may have been out of the body.
2. **Refutes spiritualism.** Paul said he heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for a man to utter. If it were possible it would be the work of the devil. Lazarus revealed nothing of the spirit world. If we could hear directly from glory, why would we need the Bible? Here was a man who actually died and went to heaven, but when he was returned to earth he was not allowed to tell anything that he saw.

3. **In Paradise.** This indicates that paradise is now with God.
4. **It was a real place.** It was not a mythical dream. It was so life-like that he did not know whether he was in the body or not. It was as real as God; as real as the earth.
5. **Future recognition.** If he did not have this body he had one so nearly like it he couldn't tell the difference.

B. Revelation 21 gives a description of heaven as a Great City.

1. The city was walled with twelve gates of precious stones as pearl and jasper.
2. The streets were of pure gold like crystal.
3. The foundation was a precious stones.
4. There was no night, no darkness, and no evil.
5. The river of life flowed through the city and the tree of life grew on both banks of the river. The leaves of it were for the healing of the nations.
6. The city was 1,500 miles in every direction—even up.
7. There were millions of people singing and serving God.

C. The bodies of the people were like Christ—glorified and immortal. They were still the same personalities.

D. The Bible teaches that we shall know and be known.

1. **We will know Christ.** We will talk with Him and worship Him.
2. **We will know the prophets and apostles.** I intend to talk with Daniel, Moses, the three Hebrew children, and Paul. This is no more unreasonable than talking with anyone we may meet here today.
3. **We will know ourselves.** We will not be victims of amnesia. Our memory lives and cannot be destroyed.

II Corinthians 5:10 says that we will receive judgement of the deeds "*done in the body*". We shall say "*Amen*" to the judgements of God. In order to do so we must know the reason.

4. **We will remember our works here.** (Matthew 7:22; 25:34-36).
5. **We will have something to do.** The angel who came to John called him a "fellovservant".
6. **At the transfiguration they had bodies and were known, yet Moses was buried.**
7. **We will see the Lamb's book of life and hear our names read.**
8. **The rich man and Lazarus while in the psirit world talked, felt and remembered.**

E. The Objections Considered

1. **Some have claimed that we will have no bodies.** This is false. We may not have this body, but we will have a spiritual one that is not corruptable.
2. **Our earthly relations will be changed.** Certainly they will be different. The Sadducees asked Christ about a woman who had had seven husbands and asked whose wife would she be in the resurrection. Christ replied that in heaven they neither marry nor or given in marriage, but are as the angels of heaven.
3. **Some have claimed that they would miss their friends.** Why? Certainly we love them, but no more than we love Christ. Many are on the broad way now and we are happy. At the judgement we will see and hear it conducted. We will say "*Amen*" and see things as God sees them. We will know that justice has been done and will be satisfied. If my own father is not there, I will not argue with God. I will not argue if I am sent away. The righteous judge will preside.

III. Conclusion

Death does not seem so bad with this picture in mind. As wonderful as this world can be, God has prepared a better one.

1. It is like when our friends move to another town. We miss them and would like to see them. "*Abraham died and was gathered to his people.*" II Samuel 12: 23, while grieving over his dead son, David said that he could not bring him back, but he could go to him. Angels came for Lazarus the beggar; we presume they do for us. In Joshua's valedictory speech (Joshua 23-24) he calls for the people to serve the Lord.
2. Saints' shout of victory. The trumpet shall sound and billions of graves shall be opened. The people shall shout, "Death where is thy sting?" They will say "Thanks be to God" and will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

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RECONCILIATION II CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

I. The Meaning of Reconciliation

- (1) "*Conciliation*"—means peace or friendship.
- (2) "*Re*"—means to do again. We rebuild a house, recharge a battery, and return to a place.
- (3) "*Reconciliation*"—means to bring back into a state of peace or friendship. We are born pure, holy and innocent. (Matthew 18:1-3). We go astray. The expression "*born in sin*" means only that we are born with the capacity to learn to sin, just as the expression born "*in a tongue*", (Acts 2:8), means those people were born with the opportunity to learn a certain native language because they were exposed to it.

II. The Agents of Reconciliation

- (1) God
Christ
Holy Spirit
Apostles
Word of God
- (2) The Apostles are called three things which we are not called. They are called:
 - (a) Witnesses—cf. Paul.
 - (b) Ambassadors
 - (c) Earthen vessels. (II Corinthians 4:7).

III. The Word of Reconciliation

- (1) The word of God is *Inspired*—II Timothy 3:16; I Corinthians 2:13.
- (2) It is the *Power* of God unto salvation—Romans 1:16;

Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16.

IV. The Terms of Reconciliation

- (1) Faith
- (2) Repentance
- (3) Confession
- (4) Baptism

V. The Time of Reconciliation

Now!

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