

THINGS SURELY
to be BELIEVED

A Primer of Bible Doctrine

VOLUME I

By

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To
My Friend
JOSEPH R. HEWITT
A BELIEVER IN CHRIST AND IN THESE TRUTHS
IN APPRECIATION
OF HIS FRIENDSHIP, AND FELLOWSHIP IN THE
THINGS OF THE GOSPEL

PREFACE

THE contents of this volume originally appeared in the magazine, *Our Hope*, over a period of about two and one-half years, under the general title, "A Primer of Bible Doctrine." The instalments bore the same sub-titles as the chapter headings in this book.

In publishing the first twenty-two chapters in bound form, we must call attention to the fact that the doctrines of Scripture are not nearly exhausted in this work. In fact, this book is only the first of four in a series which we hope to conclude in about five years, D.V. The other works, to be brought out one at a time, will be called: *Things That Accompany Salvation*, Vol. II; *Things Hard To Be Understood*, Vol. III; and *Things Shortly To Come To Pass*, Vol. IV.

The sub-title of this volume, "A Primer of Bible Doctrine," indicates its scope, and that of those to follow. The writer has not attempted to be scholarly, but has approached these doctrines from the viewpoint of the common man, of which he is one. Hence the notable absence of footnotes, which might be looked for in a work of this kind. The book is in every sense a primer.

The author, however, did not neglect the writings of others in his research preparatory to setting on paper the teachings contained herein. On the contrary, he read every worthwhile work with which he was acquainted—some of them more than once. A partial bibliography is published elsewhere in this volume, titles that can be obtained at almost any religious bookstore.

The author would acknowledge, too, helpful suggestions that were made from time to time by friends interested in the series of studies as they first appeared. The late Dr. A. C.

Gaebelein pointed out more than one weakness in the work, while other friends, Drs. Frank E. Gaebelein, Allan A. MacRae, and Wilbur M. Smith, have given invaluable assistance by their gracious counsel and advice. Nor do we wish to overlook the help rendered by Miss Marian Bishop Bower, who has so capably indexed this volume.

The prayer and desire of the author is the same in the case of this effort as it has been for his other works—the only reason, in fact, for writing on Biblical subjects: that it may redound to the honor and glory of Him who loves us and gave Himself for us. May He be pleased to use it in such a way.

E. S. E.

Philadelphia
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INTRODUCTION

THE REASON FOR OUR FAITH

Every man holds certain beliefs, that is, he believes something about God and what He expects of him, something about life today, the immediate future, and life after death. Even agnosticism is a "belief." Now these concepts or convictions may be false or true. They may be founded upon theories or upon facts. They may be inherited or they may have been accumulated through the years. It is important that a man should *know* that what he holds to is not error, but truth. How is he going to find out? By consulting the source of all truth, God Himself.

Is there a supernatural revelation? Has God spoken? 'Yes He has spoken by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2), and He speaks today in His written Word, the Bible. By the claims that it makes for itself and by its teaching the Bible declares itself to be that supernatural revelation. In it are to be found truths nowhere else unfolded. From it we can learn all that we need to know about God and man, Satan and sin, life and death, Heaven and hell. We do not say that it reveals all that there is to know about science, though science does not contradict the Word of God and cannot do so. Nor does the Bible claim to tell us all that there is to learn about the stellar system, or archeology, or sociology, or agriculture, though the laws it gives on those subjects are indisputable. But the Bible does affirm itself to be God's Word, and thus the final word about God and man, about spiritual and eternal things.

It is our premise, therefore, that the Bible, that is, the Old and New Testament Scriptures, is the Word of God and as such is "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." If this be so (and it is so), then if we are to be aware of the

doctrines of our most holy faith, Christianity, we who are Christians must know and understand what the Bible teaches. The very best way to do this is obvious: we must read God's Word and search out His truth as it is revealed therein. It sets forth the very deepest truths of time and eternity, yet it is so written as to be plain to those who will approach it in faith, diligence, and submission. And God has given us a teacher so that we need not be limited in the knowledge of Himself, and He, the Holy Spirit, is our guide into all truth (John 16:13). True, there "are some things hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16) concerning which the Christian who has a knowledge of the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, or who is a trained and consecrated theologian, has perhaps a clearer understanding than the average man or woman. But it is the Holy Spirit who is the final and infallible instructor, and as we apply ourselves, looking to Him in faith, even the most obscure passages will have light shed upon them and themselves will shed light. Certainly all truth necessary for salvation and conducive to personal holiness can be readily digested by the most unlearned. This is one of the wonders of God's Word.

Someone may ask: "If these things be true, how is it that all men do not agree about the teaching of the Bible? Some interpret the Scriptures in one way, some in another." The point is well taken. It is the reason why some are post-millennialists, some amillennialists, and others premillennialists, for example. It is the cause of different viewpoints about the ordinances, the purpose of the atonement, et cetera. It is the reason for various sects and denominations, and for some of the *isms* which claim the Bible as their textbook. Yet we contend that there can be *only one correct interpretation of any Scripture*. There may be more than one application. There may be many theories. But there is only one interpretation, one fact; *that is truth*.

It is necessary for us to become extremely personal in these matters of Bible doctrine. You have certain beliefs about what the Scriptures teach, and so have I. Where did we get them? What is their basis? Have we sought them out and found them in the Word of God, or are we resting on what another has said? Suppose you had grown up in a different neighborhood from the one you now live in, or that you had attended another church—would you hold the beliefs you now have, or would you have other ideas? If you are a premillennialist, why do you adhere to that doctrine? You may defend your viewpoint at all costs, but is it your own, your understanding of the Scripture teaching regarding the return of Christ—or have you simply accepted it because a favorite Bible teacher declares it?

It is because so many who are untaught in the Scriptures hold erroneous views of the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, while a host of others, though sound in the faith, do not have a reason for the hope that is in them (cf. 1 Peter 3:15) that we take up these studies of some of the important doctrines of the Bible. We believe that it is well to re-emphasize the foundation truths of Christianity from time to time. In doing so we may confound modern error and encourage consistent Christian living. Christianity begins for the individual with personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the only Saviour from sin and its consequences. But it does not, or should not, end there. The Christian faith is a progressive revelation, available instantly but experienced in time, consisting not only in salvation but in increasing knowledge of God, through Christ, and in increasing knowledge of His ways and purposes. An emphasis of the holiness of God will cause us to reverence Him more highly. A consideration of the grace of the Son of God, who left Heaven's glory and took upon Himself the form of a Servant, obedient to the

death of the Cross for our sakes, will make us love Him more whole-heartedly. A realization of man's sinful nature will cause us to fall more humbly before the Lord in contrition and repentance, and thanksgiving for His merices. It is well to emphasize these truths now and again, and we are satisfied that today is a time when such study is called for.

Now there is more than one "theology" in which Bible doctrine is taught in a scholarly way. But this is not to be a "Theology." We do not pretend to possess such learning. But we have studied and do study the Bible, and herein we shall seek to show in simple language what it teaches regarding some of the elementary but important truths of Christian faith and conduct. The theologian speaks of *theology*, which deals with the personality and attributes of God; *anthropology*, which has to do with the origin and nature of man; *soteriology*, which concerns God's salvation, justification, and sanctification of man; *eschatology*, which relates to future things, as the judgments, Christ's return, *et al.*; and *ecclesiology*, which pertains to the nature and purpose of the church. These things we shall study, but under more familiar Biblical and evangelical terminology, as, for example, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth of our Lord, the Deity of Christ, His Atoning Death, His Bodily Resurrection, His Return, Sin, Salvation, Justification, Sanctification, Security, the Believer's Two Natures, the Return of Christ, etc. We shall face difficulties of interpretation and apparent contradictions and seek the solution of faith in the knowledge that God cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13; cf. Num. 23:19). We recognize that there must be some assumed basis of fact for false doctrines, else they would not hold. We shall endeavor to examine such interpretations, and comparing Scripture with Scripture answer them from the Word of God with—"Thus saith the Lord."

We are only too prone to err in ourselves. There is but one infallible source-book, the Bible. It will be our authority. There is but one infallible teacher, the Spirit of God. Our dependence is upon Him. May He be our guide.

CHAPTER I

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

The source of every doctrine of the Christian faith is the Bible, and this is true of the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures. This is not to say that every teaching of our faith is formed from one statement, verse, passage, or book of the Bible. To the contrary, the full development of any one Christian creed is reached by comparing Scripture with Scripture and determining the whole scope of the subject only after considering all that the Bible has to say on that matter. This does not imply that one portion contradicts or denies another, but it declares that one isolated passage may not reveal all the truth in regard to a particular article of faith.

The substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross for sin is the central fact in God's plan of redemption. The resurrection of Christ is the seal of God's approval of His Son's vicarious death and the proof of the Deity of our Lord. These are fundamentals of the Christian faith. But the basic fundamental is the Inspiration of the Scriptures. If the Bible is the work of man and not of God, then it is subject to error and no Bible doctrine is infallible. But if, on the other hand, the Bible is the Word of God, it is consequently without error, and every doctrine arrived at by this source is truth and cannot be disallowed or altered.

Are the Scriptures inspired of God? They claim to be, and we believe that there are ample evidences within the Bible to prove this to be so, and that in addition to this internal witness to itself there are external demonstrations which will declare patently to every open minded person the fact of the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

We shall consider the subject under three major divisions.

1. What Is Meant by Inspiration

First, before these evidences are examined, it might be well to define what we mean when we speak of the "Inspiration of the Scriptures." For there are those who employ the expression to denote something other than the restricted Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Some admit that the writers of Scripture were inspired in the sense that a Shakespeare or a Milton was inspired. But that is not the kind of inspiration we are discussing. Others say that they concur with us in holding the inspiration of the Scriptures, but they mean a *partial* inspiration, that is, for example, (1) that certain portions of the Bible which contain deep spiritual truths are inspired, but that other passages or books, as the historical, are man-made and sometimes erroneous; and (2) that the general message of any book of the Bible is inspired, but not the setting down of that message. In other words, thoughts are inspired, but not words. The proponents of the first proposition will quote the extremely unfortunate translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 to be found in the Revised Versions: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc. But on two counts they are in error. First, this translation is not literal. No less a scholar than the compiler of the Analytical Concordance which bears his name, Robert Young, LL.D., gives this rendition: "Every Writing is God-breathed, and profitable for teaching," etc.* And the American Standard Version admits this as an alternate reading in the margin. In addition, the testimony of Scripture as a whole affirms that it is all divinely inspired, as we shall see. Of the second group, those who allow that the thoughts of the Bible are inspired, but not the words, we ask one question: "How can one express thoughts accurately and

*Quoted by Dr. Frank E. Gaebelin in his *Facing the Fact of Inspiration* (American Bible Conference Association, Inc., Philadelphia, 1933), p. 18.

without error unless the words employed are accurate and without error?" It is our contention that the Biblical doctrine of inspiration avers that *all* Scripture, *every* writing, is inspired of God. If this be not so then the Bible cannot be the Word of God. Being God's Word, it is without error.

The word *inspiration* is found only twice in the Bible: in Job 32:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16. The English word comes from the Latin *inspirare*, meaning *to blow or breathe into*. Thus, when we read that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," we understand that God has breathed into every Scripture. And that is exactly what the Greek New Testament tells us—"Every Writing (*graphee*) is God-breathed (*Theopneustos*, a compound of *Theos* [God] and *pneoo* [to breathe, or to blow])." So, then, we hold to the plenary (in contrast to partial) inspiration of the Scriptures, better known as the "verbal inspiration." Of course this refers to the original manuscripts as they were penned by the writers of the Bible. We do not claim for a moment that every translation in every language is without error, for copyists and translators have made some few mistakes, though remarkably few. Here, then, is a definition of the term "The Inspiration of the Scriptures": *The doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures affirms that the Bible, composed of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God which, written by the hands of human instruments under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the exact expression of God, and as such is wholly without error in the original manuscripts.*

Certain questions may arise in connection with the above definition. (1) If God inspired the original manuscripts so that they were without error, why did He not inspire the transcribers and translators so that they, too, would be kept from error? (2) What about the so-called contradictions in the Bible? (3) If every word of the Bible is inspired, then every word must be true. What, then, are we to think about

such statements, for example, as "there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works" (Eccles. 3:22)? (4) If the human writers of the Bible wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, were they merely mechanical robots, and if so, why did not God write the Scriptures with His own hand?

In regard to the first question, let us admit freely that we finite beings cannot always understand the mind of God, especially when He has not revealed it to us. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. Whatever He has made was made perfectly, yet in His wisdom He has allowed corruption to come upon that which He has created. Adam was created perfect and in the likeness of God. But Adam sinned. The first fruit tree was certainly made perfect, but the fruit of every tree, and its seed, is not today perfect. The rose in all its beauty and fragrance is an expression of God's perfect handiwork, but some roses never develop. Even the perfect Son of God was scourged and marred physically by the hands of men. It pleased God to cause the original manuscripts of His Word to be without error, but He has allowed certain corruption to touch the Scriptures through the frailty of men who have been its transcribers. However, it is to be observed that the mistakes are miraculously few, so that it is said that less than one per cent of the Bible contains any flaw, and never in respect to any important doctrine, but only in cases of numerics, or spelling, or the like. Imperfection in the original manuscripts would impugn the character of God Himself, who cannot make a mistake. Imperfection in the transcriptions points merely to the imperfection in man.

The second question has to do with so-called contradictions in the Bible. How can the Scriptures, if they are verbally inspired, contain any such inconsistencies? The burden of proof lies with the questioner. Let him point out a contra-

diction. We readily admit certain well-known *apparent* contradictions. But they fall away and become perfect in agreement under careful scrutiny. Popular fancy to the contrary, no critic of the Bible has ever been able to prove one single contradiction or error in the original manuscripts, and we leave it there. For were we to take time and space to disprove any so-called contradiction, the skeptical reader would submit another, and so on *ad infinitum*. We suggest that he who thinks he has found a discrepancy follow its detection to its source and finality, comparing Scripture with Scripture. If he does so his doubt will fade away.

The third question presents no difficulty. Every statement in the Bible, since God's Word is verbally inspired, is true in that what it relates as having taken place or having been spoken actually did take place or was spoken. But this is not to say that every word spoken is truth. For example, it is true that Satan, in the form of a serpent, said to Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). But what Satan said was not the truth. Every word attributed to Elihu in his conversation with Job is reported as Elihu spoke it, but it is not of necessity all true. In the book of Ecclesiastes the wisdom of man "under the sun" is reported. Solomon wrote every word of the book, but all that he declared is not necessarily the final truth. We must not confuse inspiration with revelation. In the case of the former we have facts stated. In the case of the latter we have divine truth unfolded. But "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

As to query number four, one has only to read and study God's Word to see that its divinely inspired penmen were not mere automatons. It was the will of God that the personalities and gifts of men should be utilized in recording

divine truth. All classes of mankind were to read His Word. One mind is appealed to by logic; another, by poetic expression; still another, by historic accuracy; and so on. So within the pages of Scripture we find the irresistible reasoning of a Paul, the lyric stanzas of a David, the precise recording of a Luke, and the humble revelations of a Daniel. God willed it so, and so it is.

2. Internal Evidences of Verbal Inspiration

A. What the Bible Says Concerning Itself

Let us consider what the Bible has to say about itself and examine, as well, other internal evidences as to the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

First, as we page through the Old Testament we read such phrases as these: "Thus saith the Lord"; "The Lord said unto Moses"; "The Lord spake, saying"; etc. Exodus 24:4 tells us that "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." The book of Joshua opens with the statement that "the Lord spake unto Joshua," and we find Him commanding Joshua to live "according to all that is written therein," that is, in "the book of the Law" (Joshua 1:1, 8), the book that God had told Moses to write. So we might go on and on to find that Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others wrote as the Lord commanded them. Nearly two thousand times the writings of the Old Testament declare themselves to be the voice of God. Well over three hundred times the very words, "thus saith the Lord," appear. No one can approach the Old Testament with an open mind without perceiving its own claim of divine inspiration.

But what of the New Testament? The very first chapter declares with inescapable authority which could be known by God alone that Mary's Child was "of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18), and that it was "the angel of the Lord" who

told Joseph of Mary's chastity and that all this was done "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet" (vss. 20, 22). Mark's Gospel opens with the words: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets . . ." The prophecy which Mark specifically quotes, Malachi 3:1, is there affirmed to be the word of "the Lord of hosts." However, disregarding further intimations in respect to the subject, we turn to several noted texts. The first is 2 Timothy 3:16 which we have already referred to more than once, which states that "every Scripture is God-breathed." Someone will say that the Scripture here alluded to is the Old Testament, and not the New, as the Apostle Paul was unaware of the New Testament, since it was not yet completed. If you will have it so in this instance, we shall simply use this verse, then, as an indication of the Old Testament's inspiration.

But what are we going to do with 2 Peter 1:19-21? First, Peter intimates that the apostles make the word of prophecy more sure, a light that shines in a dark place until the Day shall dawn. How do they make it more sure? By confirming in writing that which they have both seen and heard. The Apostle declares clearly that prophecy (and that is Scripture) came in former days, not by the will of man: "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." These holy men of old were inspired; and the whole point is lost if we do not see that he is implying that he, and the other apostles, were inspired as well in setting forth what was revealed to them.

Lest it be thought that we presume in thus suggesting that Peter had apostolic writings in mind as the object of divine inspiration, we quote from 2 Peter 3:15, 16: ". . . even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things

hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” Unqualifiedly Peter deposes that Paul’s wisdom was given him, and in the expression “as they do also the *other* Scriptures” asserts that the Epistles of Paul are likewise a part of the Word of God.

Add to these things the facts that the Old Testament is constantly referred to and quoted in the New Testament, that these twenty-seven New Testament writings, as do the thirty-nine of the Old Testament, complement each other and never contradict, and that throughout the whole we have a progressive revelation of God’s dealings with mankind and His provision for it, etc., and the unbiased and thoughtful reader will admit the Scriptures’ own testimony to their divine inspiration.

B. What Christ Said Concerning the Scriptures

The witness of the Lord Jesus Christ ought to bear more weight than that of any other, surely more than that of the skeptic of today. What did He say? We need few citations, for only he who is not familiar with the four Gospels will suggest that Christ did not consider the Scriptures the final authority. Again and again He declared, “It is written.” Again and again He referred to the writings of Moses and David and the prophets. And of the Scriptures He declared: in Matthew 5:18—“For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot [the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet] or one tittle [a small projecting portion of some Hebrew letters] shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled”; in Mark 13:31—“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My Words shall not pass away”; in Luke 24:44—“That all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me”; and in John 10:35—“The Scripture cannot be

broken.” Not the thoughts only, but the words of Scripture, even their tense and number, are inspired.

C. The Writers of Fulfilled Prophecy

Further internal evidence of the Inspiration of the Scriptures is to be had by examining the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible. “Anyone might write history,” some one may say. But only God knows the future, the end from the beginning. It is beyond the scope of this article to cite case after case. We shall mention only a few specifically. In the book of Daniel, chapter 2, the prophet of God predicted the Medo-Persian Empire about three score and ten years before it came into existence, although in the year that the prophecy was made Persia was a satrapy. Further, Daniel’s announcement, under the revelation of God, of the coming Grecian Empire was spoken two hundred and seventy years before the Empire came into existence, and while the people of that land were still made up of small tribes, with no national government. History proves the truth of his prophecy. Just as surely and as long as Babylon is in ruins (Jer. 51:37), just as surely and as long as Tyre is nothing but a place where nets are dried in the midst of the sea (Ezek. 26:4, 5), just as surely as the Jewish people are scattered among the nations (Deut. 28:64) in this age and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles, so surely is the book proved to be the Word of God. In the Old Testament there are 333 prophecies concerning Messiah, and every one of these which refer to His first advent was fulfilled in His incarnation and earthly ministry. Four hundred and eighty-four years to the day from the time that Daniel prophesied that Christ would be cut off sixty-nine septads (prophetic weeks equalling four hundred and eighty-three years) *after* “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (9:25), which took place in 445 B.C. in the twentieth year of Arta-

xerxes' reign (Neh. 2:1), our Lord was crucified. And Daniel was not writing history. He wrote more than five centuries before Christ. Josephus records that Alexander the Great read Daniel's prophecy in the year 332 B.C. Fulfilled prophecy is another evidence of the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

D. The Authorship and Structure of the Bible

We make one more reference to internal evidences, and that is to the authorship and structure of the Bible as a whole. It has sixty-six books in all, penned over a period of 1500 years by some forty writers. Each book can stand alone and witness to itself, yet every book dove-tails with every other book. And their penmen came from every stratum of life. Among them were kings and shepherds, statesmen and fishermen, physicians and tax-gatherers, poets and prophets, priests and outcasts. Yet the whole is a unit which tells without room for misunderstanding "the story of man's complete ruin in sin, and God's perfect remedy in Christ." Assemble the works of any other forty writers, produced over the last millennium and a half, and try to live by or die by their combined work! You know how impossible it would be. Only writers inspired by the Spirit of God could produce what we know as the Holy Bible. There is no other explanation.

3. External Evidences of Verbal Inspiration

A. The Witness of Archeology

As to external evidences, we shall mention only two. The first is archeology. Scientists and intellectuals, critics of the Book of books, have tauntingly denied certain of its historical assertions, declaring that nations mentioned and rulers named never lived, for the reason that no archeological findings had, at the time of the utterances of these wise men

of the world, uncovered the particular historical data referred to. But the archeologist's spade has dug up evidence upon evidence to prove the critics liars. One classic example will suffice. In Daniel five Belshazzar is mentioned as the king of the Chaldeans. For centuries secular history, though it possessed the complete list of Babylonian rulers, mentioned no Belshazzar. Instead, a king Nabonidus, son of Nebuchadnezzar, reigned in the exact period ascribed in the Bible to Belshazzar. But in the middle of the 19th century Sir Henry Rawlinson unearthed ancient Babylonian tablets which declare two things: (1) that Belshazzar was the eldest son of Nabonidus; and (2) that Belshazzar was made prince-regent during his father's captivity; and that it was he, the *acting* king, who died when Darius, king of Persia, invaded Babylon (cf. Dan. 5:30). Archeology confirms the Bible; it does not deny it. It cannot be otherwise, since the Bible is God's Word.

B. The Bible's Effect upon Men

Finally, suppose we examine the effect that the Bible has produced upon the hearts of men. If those who deny the Inspiration of the Scriptures are correct, then from beginning to end the Bible is the work of men who themselves were cheats and liars, and it is full of error and untruth. Would such a book be a good or an evil influence? We leave the answer to any fair-minded person. But what of the influence of the Bible? What change, what hope, what comfort, what joy, this Book has been responsible for! Not in one case, nor in one hundred cases, nor one thousand cases, nor hundreds of thousands of cases—but in millions of lives! What other book can be picked up by an outcast, a drunkard, a thief, a murderer, a self-righteous man, rich or poor, bond or free, multiplied again and again and again, and can change that one, those millions, into God-fearing, God-honoring, God-

believing, joyful, singing, Christ-exalting, sacrificial men and women who know no fear, but who, conscious of sins forgiven and eternal hope, look forward to eternal union and fellowship with the Christ of God? Only the Bible, God's Holy Word.

We may not understand all that is written in this blessed Book, but we can believe it, and believing it, find life and the answer to every problem and every need. "The entrance of Thy Words giveth light."

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY TRINITY

Nowhere in the Scriptures can the terms, "The Holy Trinity," or, "The Triune God," be found. Nevertheless, "Trinitarianism," the doctrine that *God is one God who at the same time subsists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Spirit*, is the teaching of the Bible. For Bible doctrine is not discerned of necessity from any one, or some few citations, nor is it always expressed in the exact terms that we are used to employing to sum it up. For example, we speak of the doctrine of "The Deity of Christ." Certainly the fact that the Son of God is God the Son is repeatedly affirmed in Scripture; but the words by which we summarize the teaching are not in Holy Writ. And thus we do not find the Godhead referred to in the Bible as "The Holy Trinity."

Those who hold the doctrine of Trinitarianism are accused by some of being polytheists, of having more than one God. Mohammedanism takes this view of us, as is clearly stated in the *Koran*, Islam's Bible, which says: "Say not, There are three gods; forbear this . . . God is but one God . . . There are certain infidels who say, God is the third of three; but there is no god besides one God." That this declaration is an attack on Christianity's doctrine of "The Holy Trinity" is unquestionable. However, its premise is wrong and reveals a total misapprehension of the teaching of Scripture. Christianity does not hold that there are three gods, but one God. Christianity is monotheistic, not polytheistic.

Nothing can be clearer than what the Bible has to say about there being only one God. We cite but two verses: Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"; and Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God." No

doctrine which contradicts this primary and essential declared truth of God and the Bible can stand. The Trinitarian does not and cannot deny this basic revelation of the oneness of God.

No less clearly than it is revealed in Scripture that God is essentially One do we find it implied and asserted again and again that God is at the same time a plurality, that is, that there are three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Godhead—each One no less God than the Other, each having the same attributes, power, and glory, and co-equal One with Another. Several Scripture references will demonstrate the truth of this assertion. The plurality of God is indicated in the very first verse of the Bible, for in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” the word *God* is the Hebrew *Elohim*, a plural proper noun. By a primary law of grammar a plural noun, as subject of a sentence, demands a plural verb; yet the verb *created* is in the singular number in the original, thus implying at the outset of the Bible the doctrine of the Three-in-One, the Triune God. But more—the creation of the universe is attributed to three Persons. Of God the Father it is said: “O my God . . . Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands” (Psa. 102:24, 25). Of our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, it is written: “For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth” (Col. 1:16, R. V.). While of the Holy Spirit it is declared: “By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13), and as to the earth, “Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:30); or, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). Thus we see that *Elohim*, who was the creator of the heavens and the earth, while one God is yet Three-in-One, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, and that each of

the divine Persons acts individually, or better, separately while at the same time acting as a unity.

A favorite comparison used by those who would illustrate what the Trinity is and how the Trinity operates is that of the tri-partite nature of man: "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. 5:23). Looking at these parts of man in reverse order we find that the *body*, *sense*-consciousness, is appealed to by anything that touches the senses: a cool bath, good food, etc. The *soul*, which we may think of as *self*-consciousness, is the seat of natural emotions: the praise of our fellow-men, the fruits of business success, the affections of life in society, have to do with the soul. The *spirit* is *God*-consciousness; it is the highest of the tri-partite nature of man, and is owned by mankind only. Our relationship toward God is bound up with the spirit. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness *with our spirit*, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). But although we have in the tri-partite nature of man, one personality with three activating forces, an example of a trinity in unity, yet it falls far short of being an illustration of the Tri-Unity of the Godhead. In only one sense do we find it wholly comparable to the Holy Trinity: we do not understand it! It is a mystery, but not so unfathomable as the mystery of the Triune God.

There is no need, however, to deny a fact because we do not comprehend it. The vast majority of men and women do not understand electricity. But that does not deter them from pushing the button on the wall in order to use the light or the electric instrument. A great host of people, especially from middle age upward, do not understand how an airplane weighing tons can fly through the air, defying the law of gravity (which they also do not understand); but they believe that the plane can fly, for they have seen it. To refuse to believe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because one does not comprehend it is to limit the Infinite to the intellect of

the finite. Surely God, who had no beginning but always was, who created the universe, the world, and the creature, is beyond our comprehension as His works are beyond our understanding. God has chosen to reveal the fact of the Trinity in His Word. Therefore we believe it.

We shall examine very briefly what the Scriptures have to say about the Holy Trinity, under three major divisions.

1. The Fact of the Trinity Revealed

We have already mentioned that the first implication of the plurality of the Godhead is to be found in the very first verse of the Bible, where the plural noun *Elohim* is used in the Hebrew. It is interesting to recall that in the Hebrew language there are three numbers: singular, dual, and plural. But for the name *God* there is no dual; only the singular and plural. Further, we have the plural pronouns referring to God in the record of the creation of man, "Let *us* make man in *our* own image, after *our* likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

Another classic Old Testament passage is Isaiah 48:16: "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." It is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who spoke these words (cf. John 18:20), and He referred to the Lord God and the Holy Spirit, the First and Third Persons of the Godhead, respectively, in this prophecy. Another instance of the Son's speaking and alluding to the Father and the Spirit may be seen in Isaiah 61:1, 2, while the same prophet records still a third instance by implication: "I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses. For He said,

Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them" (Isa. 63:7-10). Here the Father is clearly indicated in verse 7, the Son in verse 8, and the Spirit in verse 10. These are sufficient citations to convince us that the Old Testament is not silent regarding the Holy Trinity.

Surely the reader of the New Testament will not be unaware that it declares the fact of the Trinity. Passing over its implication in the birth of God the Saviour through the ministration of God the Spirit upon the virgin, Mary, we see, at the outset of the public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Trinity's manifestation. For at our Lord's baptism, as the Son came up out of the water, the Spirit was visible in the form of a dove descending upon Him, while the Father's voice was audible from Heaven itself: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16, 17). In the same Gospel, after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus gave His commission to the Eleven, saying: "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . ." (28:18-20).

Three more citations will suffice to declare the New Testament's teaching in respect to the Trinity, and the Unity of the Trinity. Paul's well-known apostolic benediction is found in 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." The Apostle Peter, in his salutation to the sojourners of the dispersion, speaks of them in his First Epistle, as "Elect according to the foreknowledge

of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ . . .” (1 Peter 1:2). And John writes, in his earliest Letter: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. . . . And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. . . . And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. . . . And this is the record [witness], that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 4:12-15; 5:6, 8-11). This merging of the names, the work, and the witness of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit is significant evidence that this Trinity composes the Godhead and that the Three share (as it were) divine Unity.

That the Scriptures teach the plurality of the Godhead, a Holy Trinity composed of Father, and Son, and Spirit, each a distinct Personality and yet divinely One God, is clear, even though all the implications of this doctrine are mystifying to the finite mind.

2. The Personalities of the Holy Trinity, and Their Work

We have seen that the Godhead comprises three Personalities: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each One of the Holy Trinity is a Person; not, however, independent of the other Two, but related and co-equal One to

Another. The Father generates the Son (Psa. 2:7), the Son is begotten of the Father (John 3:16), and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (John 16:7), as well as from the Father (John 14:16, 17). The Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14), the Son glorifies the Father (John 17:4), and the Father glorifies the Son (John 17:5). In some mysterious way, while they are not separate Personalities, they are distinct Personalities. Nor are they simply different lights in which one God presents Himself, different manifestations *alone* of God (though, of course, the Son was God manifest in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16). The Father has always been the Father; the Son has always been the Son; the Holy Spirit has always been the Holy Spirit. God the Father did not cease to be when God the Son left Heaven's glory to come to earth and become a sacrifice for sin on the Cross. God the Son is today at the Father's right hand even while God the Spirit dwells within Christian men and women and seals them until the day of redemption.

Someone may say: "I can see that the Lord Jesus Christ is a Person, for He manifested Himself in a body. But as to God the Father, and God the Spirit being Personalities—no! For do we not read in John 4:24: 'God is a Spirit'? And our Lord Himself said: 'A Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have' (Luke 24:39)." But such reasoning confuses personality with corporeity. The premise is not that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit Each have bodies, but that Each is a Personality.

Personality is composed of knowledge, feeling, and will. Examples too plentiful to need quotation can be found in the Scriptures denoting the Personality of the Father and of the Son. They are alluded to, and refer to themselves, in the personal pronouns. They hear, they speak, they will, they act; they love, they are angered, they hate, etc. The references to the Holy Spirit behaving thus are not so

numerous, and so we quote one passage to clarify the matter, namely, John 16:7-15. Here are the words of the Lord Jesus promising the advent of the Holy Spirit: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *Him* unto you. And when *He* is come, *He* will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when *He*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *He* will guide you into all truth; for *He* shall not speak of *Himself*: but whatsoever *He* shall hear, that shall *He* speak; and *He* will show you things to come. *He* shall glorify Me: for *He* shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that *He* shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Certainly "knowledge, feeling, and will" are indicated in our Lord's description of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. He is a Person who knows and hears and speaks and wills and acts and reproves and guides.

Each one of the divine Trinity is characterized by a peculiar and specific ministry. God the Father is manifested, as it were, especially in Heaven, and we think of Him as to His holiness (Isa. 5:16; 1 Peter 1:15, 16), righteousness (Ezra 9:15), mercy (Psa. 103:8), faithfulness (Deut. 7:9), and love (John 3:16). God the Son (though eternally in the bosom of the Father, and now in Heaven at His right hand) was peculiarly manifested in His earth-work, as Redeemer (1 Peter 1:18, 19), Reconciler (2 Cor. 5:19), as the Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) between God and men, our Intercessor (Heb. 7:25), Advocate (1 John 2:1), and the Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). God the Spirit is manifested especially as the One who indwells (1 Cor. 6:19), empowers and keeps the blood-bought children of God (Eph. 4:30), and who

touches the hearts and convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8).

God the Father is a Person. Yet it is wrong, and dishonoring to His glory, to picture Him as a benevolent, or angry, old man, with a great white beard. To do so is to be irreverent and profane. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And to deny the Son His Deity because He took upon Himself the form of a man is to blaspheme His holy Name. The Scriptures' witness to Him, His witness to Himself, His birth, His life, His words, His works, His death, His resurrection, His ascension—all declare Him to be the Son of God and God the Son. He is not *a* son of God; He is *the* Son of God, or else the Apostle Paul blasphemed when he wrote: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). While to speak of the Holy Spirit as "It," thus depriving Him of His Personality as the Third Person of the eternal Godhead is careless and thoughtless impiety.* He is One with the Father and with the Son.

3. The Co-Equality and Attributes of the Trinity

The very fact that the Holy Trinity is a Divine Unity presupposes that the Three Persons of the Godhead are co-equal. It is not a new thought. When our Lord declared to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," they sought to kill Him because He said "that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:17, 18). Elsewhere the Scripture declares that Christ in His eternal state was "in the form of God, [and that He] thought it not a thing to be grasped after to be equal with God, but

*It is true that in the Authorized Version the Third Person of the Godhead is referred to by the pronoun *Itself* (Rom. 8:26), but this improper rendering is corrected in the Revised Versions to read *Himself*.

made Himself of no reputation . . .” (Phil. 2:6, 7). In other words, He was and is co-equal with the Father.

When the same power, the same works, the same thoughts, and the same glory are attributed to the three Persons of the Godhead, it is not presumption to ascribe to Each co-equality with the Others. Suppose we cite an instance of this. In an earlier paragraph we showed from Scripture that the creation was the work of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now let us examine what the Word of God has to say about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is attributed to God the Father: “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24); and again, it was Paul’s prayer that the Church might know the “greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He [the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory] wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand” (Eph. 1:17, 19, 20). But our Lord claimed that power of resurrection for Himself: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But He spake of the temple of His body” (John 2:19, 21); and again He said: “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17, 18). While of the Third Person of the Godhead this is written: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

The diligent searcher of Scripture will find that there are other instances wherein the same acts are said to be performed by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

as for example, Christ's incarnation, His death, the indwelling Spirit, the sanctification of the believer, etc. He who will seek it out will see that the same attributes, attributes which belong alone to Deity, are shared by the Holy Trinity. The Father is Omnipotent (Gen. 18:14; Job 42:2). The Son is Omnipotent (Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:3; Matt. 28:18). The Holy Spirit is Omnipotent (Luke 1:35). So also the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are Omniscient (Psa. 147:5; 1 John 3:20; Col. 2:3; John 16:30; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11). The same is true of the attribute of Omnipresence (Jer. 23:23, 24; Matt. 18:20; Psa. 139:7-10). Each Person of the Godhead is said to be Eternal: God the Father (Isa. 40:28; Psa. 90:2-4), and God the Son (John 1:1; Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 8:58), and God the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14). And in addition to its being understood and accepted, of course, that God is the Father and the Father is God, the name of God is also applied to the Son (John 1:1; 1 John 5:20) and likewise to the Spirit (Acts 5:3, 4).

We have given, in so far as we are able in limited space, Scriptural proof as to the fact of the Holy Trinity, together with the Personalities, attributes, and ministry of Those who compose the Triune God. We cannot explain it all, for we do not understand it all. It is a mystery, beyond the wisdom of man, known only to the Infinite. But we are not called upon to understand it; only to believe it. Of this doctrine Dr. Robert South wrote: "As he that denies it may lose his soul; so he that too much strives to understand it may lose his wits."*

It is of the utmost importance that we believe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. To deny it is to deny the inerrant Word of God. To deny it is to dishonor the Son of God. To deny it is to be lost, for it is written: "He that believeth on

*Quoted by Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., in his article, "Trinitarianism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January-March, 1940.

Him is not condemned: *but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:18); "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? *He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son*" (1 John 2:22); "*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*" (1 John 4:15). It is a mystery, but a holy mystery, the truth of which has been revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, who is our guide into all truth. May we believe it, and cherish it because God has declared it. It is through the First Person, the Father, that we are chosen. It is through the Second Person, the Son, that we have been redeemed. It is through the Third Person, the Spirit, that we are kept. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be our abiding portion, now, and evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER III

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

The answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" is the supreme test of a man's faith. Was He only a prophet of God, and no more? So says the Mohammedan. Was He a great teacher, the greatest that ever lived, and the founder of a new religion? This is the world's viewpoint. Was He a blasphemer, who claimed for Himself the powers and authority of God? This was the estimate of the religious leaders of Judaism when He was on earth, an opinion still held by many orthodox Jews. Was He a son of God, in whom the divine spark was resident to a more marked degree than in any other man, a divine ideal? This is the appraisal of the Evolutionist, the Unitarian, the Christian Scientist. Was He but a created angel? So say the Russelites. Was He a good man, the best man of the ages perhaps, the one who revealed more than any other the ultimate in spiritual, social, and moral behaviour? Such is the judgment of much of Christendom, of Modernism. Or is He the eternal Son of God, and God the Son; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God manifest in the flesh, the Lord Jehovah, the living Saviour? It is our conviction that this is His title and degree, that He is One with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and that to ascribe to Him any less than His due as very God of very God is to dishonor and desecrate His Person; it is to deny Him, the efficacy of His work of redemption, and the Christian faith. This estimate of Him is based upon the source of all our knowledge, the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, for both the Old and New Testaments bear witness to the Deity of the Second Person of the Godhead, and that Jesus of Nazareth is He, the Christ of God.

With the exception of the atheist and the agnostic there is no question about the Deity of the *First* Person of the

Trinity, the Father. For God is God. And there are comparatively few who will deny that the Spirit, the *Third* Person of the Godhead, is truly divine. As to the *Second* Person of the Holy Trinity, those who are familiar with the Old Testament, namely, the Jews, would hardly protest the Deity of Him who manifested Himself as the Angel of Jehovah, the Messenger of the Covenant who appeared to Abraham and to Jacob, to Moses and to Joshua. But it is the fact that this Second Person of the Triune God divested Himself of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and was made flesh and dwelt among men (Phil. 2:7; John 17:5; 1:14), that causes men to stumble. They may admit that the Angel of Jehovah was God manifest, but they will not acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth is God. They do not see that the two are one and the same Person, the eternal Son of God.

Said the prophet of old: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). So we turn to the Scriptures. What have they to say about the Person of Christ? Our examination of them must be brief of necessity, and within the compass of three considerations.

1. The Witness of the Old Testament to the Deity of Messiah

When we declare that the Old Testament witnesses to the Deity of Messiah (from Hebrew, *Moshiach*, the *Anointed*; Greek, *Christos*, Christ), we do not expect to find therein the words, *Jesus Christ is God*, obviously. The truth of His Deity is discerned by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

In a previous chapter we have sought to show that the Bible teaches the fact of the Holy Trinity; God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, co-equal in glory and attributes. It is with the Second Person of the

Godhead that we are now occupied, Him whom we shall see as the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). In His Incarnation He became Emmanuel, that is *God with us* (Matt. 1:23). But He was the manifestation of God to men before He "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), for upon occasion after occasion He appeared as the Angel of Jehovah. We shall cite but a few instances of this.

In Genesis 16:7-14 we have the account of the Angel of the Lord appearing to Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. Toward the conclusion of the passage we read (vss. 10 and 13): "And the angel of the Lord [*of Jehovah*, A. S. V.] said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. . . . And she called the name of the Lord [*Jehovah*] that spake unto her, Thou God [*El*] seest me." Clearly the Angel of Jehovah is here declared to be God.

We shall not dwell upon the classic passage in Genesis 22, wherein the Angel of Jehovah stayed the hand of Abraham as he was about to slay Isaac (see vss. 11, 12), but turn to the case of Jacob, who wrestled with "a man" until the breaking of day at Peniel (Gen. 32:24-30). It is from Hosea that we learn that this "man" was an "angel" (12:4). After this Angel gave Jacob his new name, *Israel*, Jacob said: "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God [*Elohim*] face to face" (vss. 29, 30). Again the Angel is shown to be God.

Moses, too, met with the Angel of Jehovah, while he was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, in the desert near Mt. Horeb. We quote five verses as incontrovertible evidence as to the Deity of the Angel of Jehovah, namely, Exodus 3:2-6: "And the angel of the Lord [*Jehovah*] appeared unto

him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord [*Jehovah*] saw that he turned aside to see, God [*Elohim*] called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." The Angel of Jehovah is *Jehovah-Elohim*. Thus His Deity is fully established.

"But," someone will ask, "supposing this does prove that the Angel of Jehovah is divine! How does this pertain to the Deity of Messiah?" Suppose we examine some of the prophecies having to do with Messiah's (Christ's) coming to earth and His Kingdom, four in all:

The Psalmist speaks frequently of the King who is to come, whose reign is to be an everlasting reign. In the Second Psalm we read of Him, God's Anointed (Messiah), and of Him God declares: "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (vs. 7). Further allusion is made to this King in the Forty-fifth Psalm, and here He is addressed as God: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a right sceptre" (vs. 6).

The prophet Isaiah refers again and again to the promised Redeemer, Israel's Messiah. Concerning His Incarnation, the prophet declares the Word of the Lord to Ahaz: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel" (7:14). This is the One who is to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace," whose government is spoken of as

being upheld "with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever" (9:6, 7, A. S. V.). The very name to be given Him, *Immanuel* (*God with us*) is the key to His Person.

Micah, whose prophecy opens with the promise that the Lord will come forth out of His place, and come down to tread upon the high places of the earth (1:3), alluding in its far view to Messiah's second advent, speaks of His first coming in this wise: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Certainly the Anointed of God, Israel's promised Messiah, is declared to be the everlasting Son of God.

One more citation may be helpful, to show a further evidence of the Deity of Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures. But first an explanatory paragraph:

The English words *angel* and *messenger* are synonymous in the Bible, almost without exception. In the Hebrew the word translated *angel* in the verses quoted earlier is *mal'ak*, from an unused root meaning *to despatch*, and is also translated *messenger* in many instances. The same is true of the Greek. In this language *aggelos* (from the verb *aggeloo*, *to bring tidings*) is sometimes rendered *angel*, and at other times, *messenger*. In every case having to do with the matter under discussion, the English words *angel* and *messenger* are interchangeable.

With this in mind, suppose we refer to Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I will send My messenger [angel], and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger [angel] of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." No student of Scrip-

ture will deny that the second messenger referred to in this prophecy, the Angel of the Covenant, is the promised Messiah. He is clearly shown to be the sovereign Lord (cf. Isa. 51:22) and is alluded to as the Angel of the Covenant. We infer that this must be the Angel of Jehovah spoken of in passages from the Pentateuch, the One of whom Moses testified (cf. Luke 24:27). He who by His Incarnation became the Spokesman of the Godhead and the Mediator between God and man under the New Covenant (Heb. 1:2; 8:6), was the Spokesman of God, His Messenger, under the Old.

We conclude from the Old Testament, therefore (1) that since God spoke to men from time to time in days of old by His Messenger, called "the Angel of the Lord," who was Himself Jehovah, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; (2) that since the Redeemer promised of old, Messiah, though He was to be born of a virgin as the Incarnate Son, was yet *from* everlasting and is *to* everlasting, and is also called "Mighty God," "Father of Eternity," and "God with us"; and (3) that since further, this promised One, "the Messenger of the Covenant," is identical with the Angel of the Lord who appeared to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, whose God He is—since these things be so, that by Name and by promise the Messiah is identified as Jehovah God, the eternal Son, then it cannot be gainsaid that the One who should come in fulfilment of God's promise through His prophets *must* be the divine Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. That is why He is named by Jeremiah, "*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*," THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jer. 23:6).

2. The Witness of the New Testament to the Deity of Christ

Having examined the Biblical proofs as to the Deity of the

Messenger of the Lord and that He is One and the Same with the God-pledged King and Redeemer, it behooves us to determine whether the promise was fulfilled in Jesus, whom we call "the Christ."

Turning first to the Gospel records it will be seen that the point in question is declared by the first verses of three of the Gospels. Matthew 1:1 says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," thus setting forth that He, Messiah, is David's Son and Israel's King. Mark 1:1 reads: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," in these words declaring that He is Messiah, and the Incarnate Son. John 1:1 asserts: "In the beginning was the Word [shown in vs. 14ff to be Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," thus affirming the eternal Sonship of Jesus, the Messiah, and His Deity.

In the first chapter of Luke's Gospel it is clearly told that the birth of Jesus of the Virgin Mary was in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (vss. 31-33; cf. Isa. 7:14), and that He who should be born of her would "be called the Son of God." Matthew declares that the birth of Jesus fulfilled the prophecy just alluded to (Matt. 1:22), and the record in Luke 2, wherein we find that He was delivered of Mary in Bethlehem of Judaea, as Micah had prophesied seven centuries earlier (5:2), together with the angelic announcement to the shepherds and the heraldic star of the wise men (Matt. 2:1, 2), give witness to the supernatural circumstances which attended the earthly genesis of Jesus, and declare Him to be the Christ, the Son of God. His sinless and perfect life; the heavenly voice which twice pronounced: "This is My beloved Son"—at His baptism and at His transfiguration (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), and spoke yet a third time, in the city of Jerusalem, saying: "I have both glorified it [My Name], and will glorify it again" (John 12:28); His

works of power—healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, stilling the waves, raising the dead (Isa. 35:5, 6, etc.); His mighty words of wisdom, spoken as never man spake; the manner of His death, the darkness that attended it and the rending of the veil of the temple from top to bottom; His glorious resurrection; His visible ascension into Heaven—all these things certify that Jesus was more than man: He was and is the Son of God and God the Son, the Son of David and David's Lord, the Messiah of Israel, the Christ of God, the Saviour of the world. Any one of these phenomena would suggest the supernaturalness of Jesus of Nazareth; the sum total of them gives incontrovertible evidence that He is indeed divine.

Space does not permit the marshaling of the multiplicity of New Testament declarations which aver the Deity of Jesus Christ. The names, character, and attributes belonging to God and ascribed also to Jesus have been alluded to in a previous chapter.* In addition, we find that certain prerogatives which are owned by God alone are attributed to Christ, as for example: He is said to be not only the Creator, but the Preserver of all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17); the forgiveness of sins is declared to be His right (Luke 5:20; 7:48); to Him was ascribed by Himself the power and authority to raise the dead (John 5:21); and He is identified as the Destroyer of death (1 Cor. 15:26), the Rewarder of the saints (2 Cor. 5:10), and the Judge of the wicked (John 5:22).

Long after His earthly ministry Jesus of Nazareth, whom we call today the Lord Jesus Christ, was asserted to be very God of very God. The Apostle Paul, referring to Isaiah's prophecy of salvation found only in Jehovah-God, cites chapter 45:23: "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone

*II—The Holy Trinity (pp. 18-29).

out of My mouth . . . That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," in Romans 14:11, and links this promise with Christ, of whom he later writes: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God" (Phil. 2:9-11). The Apostle Peter declares that Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, will be the Rewarder of faithful shepherds of His flock (1 Peter 5:4), and speaks of Him in His present heavenly authority at the right hand of the Father, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3:22). Such a prerogative is a divine right, nothing less. Finally, the Apostle John, who, in the last Book of the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as "the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5); John, who seeing Him, fell at His feet as dead and heard Him say, as he sets forth: "Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:17, 18) —this Apostle writes: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. . . . And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 2:22, 23; 5:20).

Upon the authority of the apostolic writings of Holy Writ we affirm the Deity of Christ. To suggest that Peter, and Paul, and John, together with the evangelists, did not believe in and herald Him as the eternal Son of God is to misread Scripture. To find Him any less than Divine is to

discredit His Person, make God a liar, and be in danger of eternal death. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

3. The Witness of Christ Himself to His Deity

Not infrequently we hear it stated, by those who do not believe in the Deity of Christ, that He never claimed to be God. Such an assertion must be attributed to ignorance, wilful or deluded, of the Scriptures. But we suggest that even had our Lord never made such a claim for Himself, the fact of His Deity, attested by His Person, is still irrefutable.

A man who exercises skill at the operating table, performing, day after day, amazing feats of surgery with a dexterity beyond that of any of his fellows, does not need to declare: "I am a surgeon." His acts prove the fact, without any words. The manner of Jesus's birth, the perfection and power of His life, and the miracle of His resurrection cry out: "This is the Son of God!" Thus the Apostle Paul wrote that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from [lit., of] the dead" (Rom. 1:4)—His own resurrection, of course, and that of others, as Lazarus, etc.

We submit, further, certain assertions and promises uttered by our Lord as evidence of His claim to Deity. We quote but a few. "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). "I am the Light of the world" (John 9:5). "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (John 10:9). "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever

liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). "If ye shall ask any thing in My Name, I will do it" (John 14:14). "My sheep . . . follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27, 28). "Destroy this temple [the temple of His body—vs. 21], and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). "I have power to lay it [My life] down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? . . . And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23). "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the age" (Matt. 28:20; A. S. V. margin).

We do not believe we need to make comment upon these few statements of the Lord Jesus, chosen from a mass of kindred assertions. The thoughtful student will discern their implication as he ponders them. Surely these are not the words of a mere man. No one but God Himself could make such declarations with authority.

And now, having shown that Jesus of Nazareth, by His works and words proved Himself to be God the Son, proof that would stand even had He never laid claim to Deity, we now propose that He did claim it, and in terms unmistakable.

At the conclusion of a conversation with certain of the Jewish people, the Lord Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and that he saw it, to which statement the Jews answered: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:57, 58). This was a clear assertion of His Deity. More than two

thousand years had passed since Abraham had walked this earth, yet the Lord Jesus asserted that before Abraham was, He was. Nor did He say, "Before Abraham was, *I was*,"—but "*I am*." This was at once a declaration of eternal existence. The primary meaning of the Greek verb, *eimi*, is *I exist*. Its implication here is patently that Christ is the Self-Existent One. It is the incommunicable name of Jehovah, who from the burning bush told Moses to say to the children of Israel: "I AM hath sent me" (Exod. 3:14). The skeptic may contend that this was not an avowal of Deity on the part of Christ. But the Jews who heard Him speak understood what He meant, and "they took up stones to cast at Him" (vs. 59). Why? Because He claimed to be Jehovah.

Again, in the city of Jerusalem, certain of the Jews asked the Lord Jesus: "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." In the course of the conversation our Lord declared, "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30). What did this mean but that He is God, One with the Father? The incredulous may deny that this is a pronouncement as to His Deity, but the Jews who were there knew what our Lord meant. For we read: "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him," and when He asked them why, they replied: "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and *because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God*" (vss. 31-33).

We refer now to one other such assertion on Christ's part. In the Passover chamber, in the beautiful discourse which begins, "Let not your heart be troubled," the Lord said to Philip (who had asked Him: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us")—"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). The Father referred to is God the Father, and our Lord said that he who has seen Him (the Lord Jesus) has seen the Father. What else is this but a claim to Deity? No man picked up stones to stone Him on

this occasion, however; for those who were in His presence believed in Him as the "Christ, the Son of the Living God" (cf. John 6:69).

To believe this is to have life; to deny it is to be lost (John 3:36). "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15). Those who believed it in His day have left for us a testimony that is true, and an influence that will abide forever. And so the hosts of believers through the centuries—by their lives, by their witness to Christ, and by their faith have been the instruments of God to lead others to a like knowledge and faith, a sweet savour of Christ unto God, of death unto death to them that perish, of life unto life to them who are saved (2 Cor. 2:15, 16). Whose are the lives that count for God, in time and in eternity? Are they the Voltaires and the Tom Paines, who discredit the Deity of our Lord? Or are they the Pauls, and the Luthers, and the Moodys, and other myriads of believers in Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God? We leave the questions unanswered, for the conclusion is obvious to any one who will face the issue.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5:10). We have set forth, in part, the record of His Son that God has given in His Word. It is there—to believe, or to reject. As for us, we believe in and affirm the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, A. S. V.). That “the Word” (*ho Logos*) refers to our Lord Jesus Christ is too well established to need demonstration in an article of this nature. Jesus Christ is called “the Word” in John’s Gospel because He is the express image of the Father, the expression of Him (Heb. 1:3). That the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity and eternally the Son, became flesh, that is, walked this earth in a human body, is here set forth, as it is disclosed throughout the Gospel records.

The most noteworthy passage having to do with the incarnation of the Son of God is, perhaps, in the Epistle to the Philippians: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped after to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5–11, *free translation*). In these concise and beautiful words the Apostle Paul, under the Spirit’s guidance, declares the divine phenomenal wonder of the condescension, humiliation and exaltation of God the Son. Nor must we forget that the Second Person of the Godhead did not empty Himself and take the form of a man simply for the term of His earthly life, some thirty-three

years, but that in His exaltation He is the *Man* in the glory, at the Father's right hand, and that through the eternal ages He will bear that form and carry the scars of His humiliation for the sons of men, the nailprints and the mark of the spear's thrust at Calvary.

Our examination of the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, a subject to which the great theologians have devoted pages upon pages, must of necessity be brief. We shall limit our consideration of it to four relative themes.

1. The Condescension of God the Son

It had been condescension beyond condescension had the Son of God divested Himself to become an angel or an archangel. How much more that He emptied Himself to become Man! Even had He come to earth in the form of a great ruler, to receive the homage of all the world in a palace glorious, His condescension had been beyond superlatives to describe. But He who is equal with God emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant as He assumed the likeness of men. It is not strange that His Name is called "Wonderful"!

It was not a sudden decision that God the Son did this. From eternity it was foreknown and determined that the Second Person of the Godhead should divest Himself and become flesh for the salvation of men (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8). He, co-equal with the Father, ever in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), thought this equality not a thing to be grasped after, to be held on to, but "emptied Himself." Just how did the Son of God empty Himself? He did not lose His Deity when He became Man. God is immutable. God is God, and He cannot cease to be God. And of the Son it is written, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). He always was God the Son; He continued to be God the Son in His earthly

garb as Man; He remains God the Son, as He shall always be, in His heavenly exaltation.

We cannot express in words that which we cannot fully comprehend. In some mysterious way the Son of God laid aside His glorious heavenly form, His heavenly appearance (shall we say?), His heavenly glory, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), and took upon Himself human form, that of a servant. It was a voluntary act of greatest grace, comprehensible and possible only to God, in order that righteousness and love might effect reconciliation for sinful men. Without understanding all that is embodied in the expression, "emptied Himself," we accept it in faith, and marvel at His wisdom and grace.

Nor did the Son of God, in this divine condescension, simply take upon Himself in an instant's time, the form of adult humanity. But He entered His earthly existence as all mankind has entered it since our first parents, through His mother's womb. He lay as a Babe upon His mother's breast, the helpless Son of God!—an expression which is paradoxical to the highest degree, but true because He willed it so. Yet His was no natural birth. No earthly father was His progenitor, for He was born of the Virgin Mary, in accord with Old Testament prophecy and New Testament revelation (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:30-35). He was the Seed of the woman. Thus by supernatural overshadowing He was conceived; by natural process, as it were, He was delivered—the God-Man, divine and human; perfect in His Deity, perfect in His Humanity. Never for one instant did He cease to be the Son of God. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

2. The Union of Deity and Humanity in the God-Man*

Our Lord Jesus Christ possessed two natures, Divine and

*Known theologically as the "The Hypostatic Union."

Human. Now the Christian has two natures; the old, with which he is born; and the new, the Spirit implanted within him at his regeneration—human and divine. But our Lord had no old nature and no new nature. His Humanity was perfect and sinless humanity. He did not inherit it from His father, for He had no human father, but was conceived by the Holy Spirit. His Deity was always His, the perfect Son of God.

God the Son, divesting Himself of His heavenly glory and position, became flesh. As a Man He walked this earth. His Humanity was evidenced daily—as a Babe He was voluntarily dependent upon others; as a Child He was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51); as a Jew He was made under the Law (Gal. 4:4; cf. Matt. 5:17); in His humanity He became tired, He hungered, He thirsted, He groaned, He wept, He was grieved, He submitted to arrest and trial and death (The Gospels). As a Man He was tempted, He was smitten, He was ministered to.

But perfect Man, He was also perfect God. As God He knew men's thoughts, could overrule nature, command demons, heal diseases, give sight to the blind, make the dumb to speak, raise the dead, foretell the future. While as a Man He was made under the Law, as God He was not subject to any Law made for sinful men. While as Man He was tempted, He, the God-Man, holy in His birth (Luke 1:35), could not sin. True, He was tempted in all points like as we are, but that temptation was *apart from sin* (Heb. 4:15). The Holy Son of God could never have sinned.* And while as Man He was crucified and died, as God He could not die.

It is an oft-asked question: "When did Jesus first become conscious that He was God?" The mystery is beyond our

*The Impeccability of Christ, that He was absolutely sinless and incapable of sin, is discussed in Chapter VI (pp. 63-71).

understanding, but He was always conscious of His Deity, for He is God. God cannot be in a state of unconsciousness. In the months that He lay in Mary's womb the Son of God could have departed from that state, had He so willed. As a child He could have confounded the wisdom of the world. But He voluntarily assumed the place of an unborn babe, a child, a youth, a man, and (perhaps—we do not know!) veiled to His Humanity that which in His Humanity He did not wish to dwell upon. Thus, He said concerning certain prophecies: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

The Son of God was not, in His earthly ministry (nor is He now) two persons. He is one Person with two natures, Divine and Human, yet both indissolubly linked together now and forevermore in perfect union. It is an enigma, but no more so than that God the eternal Son could take on human form and walk among men, no more so than that the Man, Jesus, is now eternally exalted in the glory. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

3. The Humiliation of the Son of Man

We are not endeavoring to make a fine distinction between the condescension of Christ and His humiliation. We have used the terms merely for the sake of an outline, headings under which to deal with two phases of the same subject. For it was humiliation as well as condescension for our Lord to divest Himself and become flesh; it was condescension as well as humiliation when He suffered the death of the Cross. We have applied the word *condescension* here to that aspect of His humiliation said to attend upon His emptying Himself, to take the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men. We use the word *humiliation* here specifically relating to His humbling Himself, to become obedient unto death.

It was humiliation for the Son of God to become flesh—to be born in a stable, to be carried a fugitive into Egypt, to dwell in a humble home, to be subject to human “parentage,” to have nowhere to lay His head, to suffer the taunts of men, to be spat upon and smitten. But His humiliation was made complete when He subjected Himself to the cruel death of a criminal on the Cross. There the sinless Son of God, the spotless Lamb of God, took our sin upon Himself, was made sin for us. There, He was forsaken of God (Mark 15:34)—God’s righteousness and holiness demanding that the Sin-Bearer be abandoned, in view of that very fact that He was the Substitute for sin. He was *made* sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). It was not His sin; it was ours. He knew no sin. But it was not our blood, but His, that poured forth as sin’s expiation. There on Calvary the Son of God, who spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, took man’s place in suffering His greatest humiliation. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

This humiliation of the Son of God was necessary in God’s plan of salvation for men. Unless man were to die for his sins, someone else had to die in his place, for “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), and “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Now God cannot die, and since He is a Spirit, He could not shed human blood. So in His wisdom God ordained that the Second Person of the Godhead should become flesh. By so doing the Son of God became to mankind the express image of His Person (Heb. 1:3); He became the revelation of God to mankind (John 1:18; 14:9); He became the Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5); He became the Lamb of God to mankind, the one sacrifice for sin, the Servant who gave His life a ransom for many (John 1:29; Heb. 10:7-10; Mark 10:45). It is important to recognize and confess the Deity of Christ: “Whosoever shall confess

that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15). But it is likewise important to recognize, without detracting from His Deity, and to confess the perfect Humanity of God's Son: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come" (1 John 4:2, 3).

4. The Exaltation of the Son of God

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

From eternity the Son had been in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). But now, because of His humiliation and obedience, even to the death of the Cross, God highly exalted Him. The Son's earth-work was finished when He dismissed His spirit at Calvary (Luke 23:46; John 19:30). Henceforth there was no humiliation for Him. His blessed body was placed in the virgin, rock-hewn tomb of a rich man. No enemy hands touched it. And by His mighty power God the Father "raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23). "*Wherefore*" (because He was obedient unto death) God highly exalted Him. His place at

the Father's right hand is glory earned, acquired glory, the reward of the Father for the work accomplished on earth.

There in Heaven He sits—our Intercessor and Advocate (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1)—the *Man* Christ Jesus. It is *Jesus*, the name of Christ's Humanity, that is above every name. It is to *Jesus*, the God-Man, that every knee shall bow. It is *Jesus* that every tongue shall confess is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. He who emptied Himself and became flesh, who humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, was indeed the Son of God and Son of Man, perfect in His Deity, perfect in His Humanity, the perfect Sacrifice, the perfect Example (1 Peter 2:21). The Incarnation of the Son of God was God's wisdom by which was brought to pass man's salvation, God's vindication, and Christ's exaltation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

CHAPTER V

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

One of the most bitterly attacked tenets of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our Lord. The consistent rationalist does not believe in anything that is miraculous, but in the case of Christ's supernatural birth we are faced with the incongruity of some who will accept other miracles while denying the power of the Omnipotent God to effect the Son's Incarnation in a supernatural way. Modernism, rejecting the Virgin Birth of Christ, seeks to show that it is entirely immaterial whether He was born of a virgin or not. To this end its high priest, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, writes: "Do not, I beg of you, tie this great affirmation (the divinity of Jesus) up with miraculous accompaniments, such as the virgin birth. I am not deeply concerned whether you believe the virgin birth as a historic fact or not, although, as you know, I cannot believe it. But I am concerned that no one should tie up in one bundle the virgin birth and the divinity of Jesus."* We take issue with Dr. Fosdick in this statement on two counts: one, in his denial of the teaching of the Scriptures; and two, with his premise that the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is not tied up in one bundle with His Virgin Birth.

If Christ was not Virgin Born, then the Bible is not the inerrant Word of God. If He was not born of a Virgin, then He is not the Son of God. If the account of His Virgin Birth is a falsehood, then He is not the Saviour. If Christ was born other than miraculously, then there is no explanation of His character. The Deity and Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be separated—either both of these facts are true, or neither of them is true. The Bible declares une-

**Living Under Tension*, by Harry Emerson Fosdick (Harper & Bros., New York, 1941).

quivocally that Christ was born of a Virgin. The Bible is the written Word of God. Therefore, either God is mistaken, or the critics are mistaken. There is no other conclusion to be drawn.

The critics of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ offer no proof of their contention, though surely the burden of proof rests with them. Instead, having rejected the miraculous birth as a biological impossibility, and, therefore, beyond credence, they propose certain theories and raise certain objections, none of which bear sufficient weight to convince even themselves, for they are constantly seeking new so-called proofs and proposing new theories. Suppose we examine the five most frequently heard objections to the Virgin Birth of our Lord.

(1) It is said that the accounts in Matthew and Luke are legendary as to source, that these writers manufactured their stories from mythology. Now it is perfectly true that ancient mythology offers more than one tale of supernatural (using the word here as meaning that which is *above and beyond nature*, though not necessarily divine) birth. But we do not know of one instance in mythology wherein a son is born to a virgin. Always the mythological brings in some outside agent—one of the gods, an angel, etc., and, nearly without exception, the tales are immoral and gross. Nor do the legendary accounts of the births of such men as Zoroaster, Confucius, Plato, and others, compare in any way with the reverent and holy records of the Gospel narratives. However, one fact alone is sufficient to offset any such theories: no faithful Hebrew of the First Century would have thought for one moment of borrowing from pagan mythology for any conceivable purpose whatever. Certainly none of the early Christians would have dishonored his Lord by making use of mythological and idolatrous legends as the basis of his account of Christ's Birth. To hold otherwise is to ignore

all that we know from contemporary history of Israel at the time of Christ.

(2) It is suggested that Matthew and Luke invented their accounts of the Virgin Birth in order to conform to Old Testament prophecy. While such a proposal would not be beyond the realm of possibility had it to do with other than God's Word, we have no reason to believe, from contemporary literature, that the Jews of that time were familiar with the prophecies concerning the Virgin Birth of Christ, or that, knowing these Scriptures, they discerned their full implication. "There is not one single sentence, in any contemporary Jewish writings, that would indicate that the Messiah would be born as Matthew and Luke indicate He was born. In fact, the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 seems to have been either lost sight of, or was not understood by the Jewish people, until it *was* actually fulfilled in Christ's Virgin Birth, and then it was recalled. The simple facts of the case make it impossible that Matthew and Luke should ever have built up such a remarkable story around a verse like this, which was not being discussed with these implications during the time of Christ's advent on earth."* And if the two evangelists were themselves aware of these prophecies and invented what they recorded to agree with them, the best that we can say about Matthew and Luke is that they were deceivers. If this be the case, then the Bible is not inspired.

(3) It is objected that Matthew and Luke are not reliable sources of information in a matter so personal as the birth of the Lord, inasmuch as they could not have been eye-witnesses to all that took place. Neither were they eye-witnesses to the Temptation of Christ in the wilderness, though they both record it. Does this argue that He was not tempted of Satan? Nor was Luke an eye-witness to the

*Wilbur M. Smith, D.D., *The Supernaturalness of Christ* (W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, 1940), pp. 93, 94.

visit of the Child Jesus to Jerusalem in His twelfth year. Is this a proof that He remained in Nazareth and did not attend the feast that year? These evangelists wrote under the guidance of the Spirit, who revealed certain truths to them. And as for Luke, at least, it seems clear from the introductory remarks of the Third Gospel that he investigated fully the things pertaining to the Lord Jesus, before he set them down for his friend Theophilus.

(4) There is that which is known as "The Argument of Silence," by which it is avowed that inasmuch as Mark, John, Peter, and Paul do not mention the Virgin Birth of Christ in their writings, the doctrine is false. This is fallacious reasoning. We do not recall that the Apostle Paul refers to the Sermon on the Mount, or that Peter has anything to say about the Olivet Discourse. Are we therefore to cast aside these two messages of our Lord as having never been uttered? Throughout their writings these four men of God declare the Deity of Christ—and unless He was born in a supernatural way He cannot be Divine.

The Apostle John goes back in his Gospel far beyond the events of Nazareth and Bethlehem. He writes of the One who was in the beginning with God and was God, who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 2, 14). The Apostle Paul looks beyond Christ's conception, too, to the time when He was "in the form of God" and then became flesh (Phil. 2:6-8). Singularly enough, the very fact that Paul did not mention the Virgin Birth of Christ is fair evidence that he believed it. For Paul and Luke were friends. Luke accompanied him in much of his journeying, as the historian of the Acts, and was with the Apostle at Rome (2 Tim. 4:11) shortly before Paul's martyrdom. From what we know of Paul's writings, if there was anyone teaching a doctrine which was contrary to the Word of God, the great Apostle was careful to point out the error and refute it.

Paul's very silence implies his assent to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ. Are we to suppose that the Apostle Peter, an eye-witness to the majesty of the Lord (2 Pet. 1:16ff; Matt. 17; etc.), who confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, would doubt His miraculous birth? But it was not within the scope of his epistles, or Paul's writings, to deal with that which properly fits within the compass of the Gospels. As to Mark, one fails to discern the whole purpose of his Gospel who does not see that it reveals the Servant-Son. Mark does not mention Christ's childhood, either. That does not imply that our Lord was never a child. The Second Gospel opens where the record of a servant would logically begin—with his service. "The Argument of Silence" is woefully weak, an extremity to which unbelief will go to disavow the clear teaching of the Scriptures.

(5) Finally, it is said (by a limited few) that the accounts of the Virgin Birth of Christ are spurious, having been added to the texts of Matthew and Luke at dates later than the original MSS. Such argument is entirely and wholly without scholarly documentation and intellectual honesty. The opinions of scholarship as a whole can be summarized in the words of another: "There never were forms of Matthew and Luke without the infancy narratives."* The argument against textual authority of the Virgin Birth narratives simply does not stand up, for their appearance in the First and Third Gospels is unassailable.

In summation of the objections to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ the criticisms are entirely modernistic. That our Lord was born of the Virgin Mary was

*Johannes Weiss, *Theological Rundschau*, 1903—quoted by J. Gresham Machen in *Princeton Review*, October, 1905; James Orr, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*; and Louis Matthews Sweet, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. V, p. 3052.

accepted fully in the early church. Now let us admit that, even if there were no factual evidence that Christ's Incarnation was accomplished by God in a miraculous way, there would undoubtedly be rumors and fanciful tales which would multiply among the ignorant and credulous. In such a way the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ might have developed—there being wanting documentation *pro* and *con*. But such fables would hardly be believed by men of intellect and honor, historians and commentators whose names and works have come down through the centuries. For them to believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ unless documented is inconceivable. Yet we find that such men as Ignatius, who was alive at the time of the writing of Matthew's Gospel, and Irenaeus, and Origen, and others who wrote from half-way through the First Century until well into the Third, unitedly admitted the evidence of the Virgin Birth, believed it, and promoted it. These were not men easily deceived. They were men of renown, whose testimony is respected, and who were willing to die for the faith that they held, as some of them did. Is their witness to be cast out with that of Matthew and Luke by the criticism and unbelief of some few, nineteen centuries removed from the event in question?

But what we have written is only preambulatory. What saith the Scriptures? This is our final authority. We shall confine ourselves to three considerations.

1. The Predictions of the Old Testament Concerning the Virgin Birth of Christ

In the first pages of the Bible we find the earliest prophecy as to the Virgin Birth of the Redeemer. We allude, of course, to Genesis 3:14, 15: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise

his heel." Now, it is a well-known biological fact that the seed emanates from the male, and not from the female. Thus, when God declared that Satan's head should be bruised by the seed of the woman, He excluded the male element in the birth of this One who should come forth from the woman to defeat the devil. The significance of the prophecy is wholly clear, now that the Incarnation of the Son of God is history. But its implication was intelligible before the birth of Christ to those of discerning minds. Whether fully understood by the patriarchs, or not, however, there in the first book of the Bible the Virgin Birth of the Saviour was written for all to see.

The next to declare the Virgin Birth of Christ was Isaiah, who, seven centuries before the nativity of our Lord, penned the promise of God to King Ahaz, the son of Jotham: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin* [*lit.*, the virgin] shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel [God with us]" (Isa. 7:14). The prophecy can be left here without comment. For how the Spirit of God could have pledged that the coming Redeemer, the Son of God, should be born of a Virgin in words more clear and concise than these we do not know.

Surely the honest student of the Bible must accept the fact that the Old Testament teaches the Virgin Birth of Christ. Only the biased mind will come to another conclusion, for the seed of the woman does not speak of natural conception, but supernatural, as does the clear declaration that "the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son."

*Critics of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ have made much of the Hebrew word translated *virgin*. It is *almah*, which, they say, does not mean *virgin*, but a *young woman of marriageable age*. In answer we draw attention to three other passages in the Old Testament, Genesis 24:43; Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8, in all of which the Hebrew *almah* is translated *virgin*. It is left to the reader's judgment whether or not the word means a *young woman of marriageable age*, yes, but more specifically, *one who is wholly chaste*.

2. The Witness of the New Testament to the Virgin Birth of Christ

It is obviously impossible to quote in full the nativity accounts of Matthew and Luke, or to analyze and compare in minute detail in the space at our disposal. We shall consider some of the most vital factors here. The diligent searcher will seek fuller confirmation by his own studies of the Bible.

In the genealogy in Matthew 1 we see the line of Joseph traced from Abraham, forty-two generations in all. Two matters demand our consideration.

First, it will be asked: "If Joseph were not the father of Jesus, why is his genealogy given by Matthew?" It is written because it was necessary that Israel's Messiah should have unquestionable right to the throne of David. Through Mary the Lord Jesus was the lineal descendant of David, as Luke shows.* But because a woman had no right to the throne, even though Mary was of David's seed, through Nathan, legally her Son would not be the heir to the throne. But Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, was likewise a descendant of David, through the line of Solomon, and also through Jechonias (Matt. 1:11), upon whom a curse had been written that none of his seed should prosper upon the throne of David (Jer. 22:30). But the Lord Jesus was not of his seed, but only of his line. As the adopted Son of Joseph He had legal right to the throne, and the curse did not fall upon Him.

Second, observe that from Abraham to Joseph it is said that so-and-so *begat* so-and-so, the usual expression in relationship to the natural birth of a son and heir. But when it comes to the birth of Jesus the form changes: "And Jacob

*Luke 3. This is Mary's genealogy, though her name is not mentioned. Heli was Mary's father, Joseph's father-in-law. It was not uncommon in Biblical times to refer to a son-in-law, and also to a grandson, as a *son*.

begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom [Mary] was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (1:16). Verse 17 is parenthetical. Verse 18 begins: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise . . ." The word translated *now* is the Greek *de*, better rendered, *but, on the other hand*. This is significant. "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas . . . and Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon . . . and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. . . . *On the other hand* the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. . . ." This birth was different from all others! It was not normal, but "on the other hand . . . was on this wise."

There follows the brief account of how our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. Her Child was of the Holy Ghost. Joseph, learning of her condition, was going to put her away in conformance with the Law, but the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him what was to happen. And Joseph—who, next to Mary, was the one most concerned with the circumstance—believed him, took Mary for his wife, and when the divine Child was born, "called His Name Jesus [*Jehovah saves*]," in accord with the angel's command (1:21, 25).

In Luke's record of the birth of the Saviour, we have a long account, in chapters 2 and 3, with intimate details concerning Mary's condition, penned by a physician. Here again it is told of Mary's chastity (1:27), that the Holy Spirit would be the instrument of conception (1:35), that this Jesus who should be born should be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God (1:32, 35). Observe Mary's innocence and incredulousness: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (1:34), and her submissiveness to the will and favor of God, whatever the cost in the judgment of her acquaintances.

When Mary paid a visit to Zacharias and Elisabeth, the very babe that Elisabeth was herself carrying responded in a most unusual fashion, while Elisabeth, filled with the Spirit, recognized the miraculous and tremendous event which was occurring: "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (1:43). Now it is not the customary thing for an older woman to greet in this fashion an unmarried mother who comes to her house. Elisabeth believed that the Saviour was to be born of a virgin.

Further, note that Mary stayed in that house three months. Zacharias, the husband of Elisabeth, was a priest, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (1:5, 6). According to Mosaic Law unfaithfulness on the part of a betrothed virgin was considered as adultery, and in the light of this the penalty which Mary would have had to pay, were she what natural appearances would suppose her to be, was severe indeed (cf. Deut. 22:23, 24). Certainly the godly Zacharias must have acted other than he did in being her host for three months, but for one thing: Zacharias believed that Mary was the virgin mother of the Christ of God.

Other noteworthy testimonies to the unusualness of the birth of the Lord Jesus were the star that appeared in the heavens (Matt. 2:2, 10); the annunciation by the angelic host to the shepherds (Luke 2:8ff); the manner in which Mary and Joseph were brought to Bethlehem that the Scripture might be fulfilled that the Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting, should be born there (Luke 2:1; cf. Micah 5:2); and the adoration of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38).

The Virgin Birth of Christ was foretold in the Old Testament, and amply testified to in the New Testament. We believe it because it is written in the Word of God.

3. The Necessity for the Virgin Birth of Christ

To those who say that it is not of vital importance whether or not Christ was born of a Virgin, we reply: "It is of the utmost importance. Christ had to be born of a virgin, and if He was not, our faith is vain." For if Christ was not Virgin Born, then He was born as other men, conceived in sin, and He Himself needed a Saviour.

To be able to be the Redeemer it was necessary that the Son of God take on human form. He could not die for other men unless He Himself was a man. In order to be Israel's Messiah-King He had also to take on human form to be Abraham's seed, and to come through the line of the House of David.

But in becoming in fashion as a Man, He could not do so in the natural way, through the agency of a man and a woman. First of all, He could not be born in a natural way without making of no effect the prophecies of Moses and Isaiah, written under the Spirit's guidance, that He would be the Seed of the woman, the Son of the virgin. But there are other reasons.

That which is born of natural generative processes is new life: there comes into being something, or better, someone who never existed before. However, this could not be so in the case of the Son of God, who was and is eternal. He always was; He was in the beginning with God. Therefore the natural process of birth had to be replaced with a supernatural conception in His case. He could not begin. He was — and through the Spirit's instrumentality He was placed in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

Again, let us never forget His Deity. He was perfect Humanity, to be sure. But He was perfect God also. Thus He could not have been born by natural means. Even in the womb He was guarded from the sinfulness of Mary's

human nature—which could not enter God—by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

God cannot be born. God is. Had Christ come forth by natural processes, He could not have been Christ. His character and works demand this extraordinary birth, else they cannot be explained. He was absolutely sinless. There was no sin in Him. Whence this perfection, if He were born as other men? From every angle—from the revelation of God's Word, from the sinlessness and perfection of Christ's Person, and from logic itself, there can be no other explanation but that that which was prophesied of Him, and that which is testified of Him, and that which is demanded of Him are true: He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.

Let us not limit Almighty God. Concerning this very matter the historian Luke wrote: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." What if some men reject the truth of God's Word, the miracle of Christ's birth? They reject it to their own eternal loss. As for us, we accept God at His Word, in faith believing, our assurance unshaken by the scoffing of those who are in darkness.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPECCABILITY OF OUR LORD

The word *impeccable* comes from the Latin, *im*, meaning *not*: and *pecarre*, *to err, to sin*, and connotes explicitly, *not liable to sin, exempt from the possibility of doing wrong*,* so that when we speak of “the impeccability of our Lord,” we are stating by that expression not only that He did not sin, but that He *could not sin*. This doctrine is a necessary corollary to that of the Deity of Christ. He is the Son of God and God the Son. God cannot sin. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ not only did no sin, but it was not possible for Him to sin.

If it were not proved by His very Person, His works, and His words that He never sinned, and if it were not stated in the Word of God that He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21) but was absolutely holy, without spot or blemish (1 Pet. 1:19), we should still know that He was sinless—because He is the Son of God, and because God raised Him from the dead. Had there been the slightest taint of sin upon His holy Person, He would have needed to die in His own behalf and could never have taken our place in death as our Substitute. But He was raised from the grave, and this is the proof of His Person, His sinlessness (Rom. 1:4).

Beyond the fact that our Lord never committed a sinful act, in thought, word, or deed, it is important to understand that He absolutely could not do so. To Him sin was an impossibility because of the very nature of His Being, His perfect and immutable holiness. To hold otherwise is to dishonor the Person of our Saviour-God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“But,” someone will ask, “do not the Scriptures declare that He ‘suffered being tempted’ and that He was *in all*

*Webster’s New International Dictionary, 2nd Edition.

points tempted like as we are'? It is true that He never sinned, but certainly if He suffered in temptations like ours in all points, He could have yielded to them, He could have sinned. Of what power those temptations if Christ was not in danger of succumbing? And how can He be touched with the feeling of our infirmities unless He knew temptation as we know it?"

In answer, we shall turn to those passages of Scripture which have to do with the temptations of our Lord. Our examination will consist of four considerations.

1. Christ Was Tempted

It is not necessary to cite the accounts, in the three Synoptics, of our Lord's temptation by the devil. They are familiar to all. In them we find that Christ was tempted for forty days (Mark 1:12, 13), and that this temptation resolved itself into three specific appeals on Satan's part—to Christ's body, His soul, and His spirit (Matt. 4:1-11).

The first temptation was, in His enhungered condition, to turn the stones into bread, thus to satisfy His physical need. But our Lord came to do the will of the Father. Since He had left Heaven's glory to become the Son of Man, it was not the Father's will that He should make use of His divine power to alleviate the physical sufferings identified with having a body of humiliation (cf. Matt. 27:34).

The second temptation came to Him as Messiah, to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, that all might see His miraculous descent, and acknowledge His Person. But the words which Satan omitted when he quoted the 91st Psalm, "to keep Thee in all Thy ways," are those which would keep our Lord from heeding such a suggestion. For it was the Father's way that the Son of God should tread the lonely path of humiliation and rejection, leading to the Cross, that He might save His people from

their sins. Thus Christ answered from the Old Testament: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. 6:16).

The third temptation was offered as an appeal to the spirit, to accept from the prince of this world, Satan, all the kingdoms of the world. But why should Christ yield to this challenge? The prince of this world could find nothing in Him to respond (John 14:30). It was the will of the Father that He should inherit the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, that He should be exalted on the Father's right hand, because He, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, voluntarily became the Lamb of God, who by His death should take away the sin of the world. But this must be done in the Father's way and the Father's time, and not by the gift of the serpent, the devil.

Was there any part of these temptations which drew our Lord toward evil? Did He have any desire within Him to do His own will and not the will of the Father? Was there any urge to follow the path of disobedience? Of course not. The word *tempt* has two connotations. It may mean *an enticement to evil*. It may also mean, *to put to trial, to test*. It is in the latter sense alone that it can apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no sin in Him. In the womb of Mary He was "that holy One" (Luke 1:35). He did always those things which pleased the Father, the Father's will (John 4:34; 8:29). He knew no sin, but was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). His temptations were but tests, to prove His holiness and worthiness to fulfil the Father's will. Where gold is tested in prepared chemicals, in proportion to its purity it is brought forth undiminished. The acid eats away the alloys, leaving only the pure precious metal, the genuine gold. So the Lord Jesus, the perfect God-Man, when tested, came forth from His temptation unscathed, untouched, undiminished—pure and holy.

2. Christ's Temptation Was Apart from Sin

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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, sin apart" (Heb. 4:14, 15; *free translation*).

It is the last portion of verse 15 upon which we fix our attention. In both the Authorized and Revised Versions the translation "yet without sin" is erroneous. The word *yet* is not in the original language, while *without sin*, from the Greek *chooris hamartias*, is better rendered *apart from sin*, or *sin apart* (as also in Heb. 9:28). ". . . but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart." The matter of sin did not enter into the temptations of Christ.

In our Lord Jesus Christ there was no old nature, no inherent sin. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, even in the womb of Mary He was protected from the infection of evil, from the tinge of sin, by the Spirit's overshadowing (Luke 1:35). There was nothing within our Lord to which sin could appeal. It was different with the first man, Adam. He was created in innocence. But the second Man, the Son of God, was born in *holiness*. He was (and is) God. In His temptations the matter of sinning did not enter, for He could not sin.

Let us seek to clarify this by walking with Him along His earthly pathway. Our blessed Lord comes to the Temple and sees there a man born blind, holding a beggar's receptacle in which are a few coins dropped there by passers-by. For one instant can you think that the temptation to steal those coins could have come to the Saviour's mind? God forbid the thought! Or we see Him meeting with some of His enemies. They ask Him a pointed question to which a

truthful answer will mean further enmity and the threat of death. Can you conceive that there could have entered Christ's being the suggestion to lie out of the situation? We shrink even from the intimation of such an idea. Under another trying circumstance, could the holy Son of God have cursed, or sworn? A thousand times no! In Him was no selfishness, no lust, no dishonesty—nothing to which sin could appeal. Never, *never* did the temptation to sin emanate from within or appeal from without. Never could sin attach to Him. It could not, because of His perfection, His holiness.

But does such a conclusion make unreal His temptations? If it was not possible for Him to sin, if there was no desire on His part to do His own will rather than the will of the Father, does this take away from the genuineness of the temptation? Suppose you have in your possession a number of so-called diamonds, some of them imitation, some real, and one perfect. You take them to an expert for his examination. He puts them under the microscope and to every common test. A few are rejected as nothing but glass. Others are diamonds, to be sure, but they fall short of perfection, due to a yellow cast in one instance, a cloud in another, and so on. Only one of the diamonds is perfect. It has been tested under every known test, and is pronounced a gem of highest quality. Is the test any less real in the case of that one than in the cases of the others? No!—it has met the test and has no blemish. While the analogy, as any illustration must be, is limited, yet in a small way it pictures how the Son of God was tested. Every temptation brought to Him was a test whereby He was proved to be the perfect and holy One, and the only One who could meet such a standard with no flaw, no blemish. He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart, for there was no sin in Him, and sin had no attraction for His holy Being.

3. Christ Suffered Being Tempted

Let us digress for a moment to look at another verse in the New Testament that requires our consideration, Hebrews 2:18: "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Some may ask: "How is it possible that the Lord Jesus suffered when He was tempted if sin did not enter into His temptation? What were these temptations that made Him suffer?"

The very fact of Christ's holiness was the greatest cause of His suffering when tempted. For although within Him there was no desire to do aught than the will of His Father and from without the suggestion of sin could find no fertile ground, the existence of sin in the world, and contact with it caused Him to suffer, being holy. There was a time, for example, before you knew Christ as your Saviour and Lord, that you might have been able to hear His blessed Name taken in vain without being concerned about it, or at least, not to any great extent. But then you became a Christian. Within your heart the Spirit of God took up His abode. It was no longer easy for you to hear Him blasphemed and dishonored. And as you have grown spiritually during the years, exactly proportionately do you shrink from such language. Yesterday, in unregenerate days, the sensuality and lust of the world were of little moment to you; in fact, you may have entered into them to a small or large extent. But today you are a child of God, and your soul is appalled and sorely distressed at the very existence of such evil. To have been brought into proximity to it, even for an instant, leaves a scar upon your heart. Why? Because you have been born from above. The new nature in the believer is repelled by sin (cf. 1 John 5:18).

How much more the Holy One of God was made to suffer as He beheld and came into contact with unbelief, dishon-

esty, greed, and blatant sin of all kinds! When Satan, who in ages past was the anointed cherub whose place was in the holy mountain of God (Ezek. 28:14), sought to turn Him away from the will of God, although there was no response in Him, yet our Lord must have suffered in the very presence of the evil one. When He saw those for whom He had left the glory of Heaven that He might die in their stead turn cruel hearts and voices against Him, surely He suffered. When He hung upon the Cross, being there made sin for us, so that for the only time in all the ages and eternities sin touched Him, did He do other than suffer? These were temptations, testings, through which He proved Himself Messiah-God. Thus, "He Himself hath suffered being tempted," and is able to succor us, to help and rescue us, in our temptations.

But what, specifically, were these temptations of our Lord? How was He tempted in all points like as we are, if there was no temptation to sin? How can He feel with us in our weakness, since our temptations are so frequently sinward? We shall seek to answer these questions by a return to Hebrews 4:15.

4. Christ's Temptation Was in All Points Like Ours, Sin Apart

Since we have concluded, as we must conclude in view of the integrity of the Son of God, that His temptations could only have been apart from the matter of sin, and since in those temptations Christ suffered, it behooves us to consider what they were. Remember, the word *temptation*, as used here, has the significance of *test* or *trial*. Well, what tests, what trials does the child of God have, other than those that pertain to sin? For our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tested in all points like as we are, apart from sin.

The Lord Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God, was subject voluntarily to the physical limitations that beset us all. He became tired, He was enhungered, He groaned, He wept, He was "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). He was misunderstood, even by His brethren, and despised by His fellows because of intimations concerning His birth. He was lonely, and He had not where to lay His head. Betrayed, forsaken, rejected, spit upon and mocked, He was nailed to the cruel Cross. Every trial of mankind, apart from sin; every test that the child of God is called upon to face, He faced, excepting sin. Have you heartaches? So had He. Are you poor in this world's goods? So was He in His humiliation, though He created all things. Do relatives and friends look down upon you, despise you, forsake you? That was His experience. Is your life hard? So was His—"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted." Do you suffer in your testimony to God? So did He suffer as He, the holy, sinless One, became sin for us, and God in righteousness turned from Him. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13)—and He has tasted every one of them, apart from sin. His temptation was in all points like ours, sin apart; so he *is* touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows, He understands, He cares.

The whole divine plan of salvation for mankind is bound up in the absolute sinlessness of the God-Man, Jehovah-Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. Had He ever sinned He would have had to pay sin's wages, which is death (Rom. 6:23), for Himself. Had He been able to sin He could not have been the Son of God. If He was not the Son of God He could not have died for all. But from within and without sin had no part with Him; it could not. So it is that He, the Mighty One exalted on High, having suffered being tempted and on the Cross for our sins, is touched with the

feeling of our infirmities, and is able to aid us in them. Such is the Intercessor and Advocate that is ours at the Father's right hand. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

CHAPTER VII

THE ATONEMENT

Another of the most fiercely objected to tenets of the Christian faith—rejected by much of Christendom, but never by Christians—is the Doctrine of the Atonement, that Christ died for our sins, that His death was sacrificial and absolutely necessary for man's redemption. Many would have us believe that our Lord's crucifixion was otherwise, that on the Cross He suffered a martyr's death. Not admitting that man is lost because of sin, they see no need of his redemption, but urge us to accept the words of Jesus and follow His example, in order that "the divine spark in every man" (a wholly unscriptural theory) may fructify into a good life and righteousness before God. Some even go so far as to suggest, either directly or by innuendo, that since the Christian emphasis upon the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is repugnant to many, it would be better to exclude from sermons and hymns and delete from God's unchanging Word all reference to the blood of the Son of God, which flowed at Calvary. This is Satanic doctrine, of course. It is the flaunting of man's own wisdom in the face of that which is written in God's Holy Word. It is the disparagement of the Person and Work of the Son of God.

Now we are not redeemed by the Doctrine of the Atonement, but by the atonement itself, by the precious blood of Christ. It is possible to understand but little about the relationship between the Cross of Christ and human sin, and yet be saved, through faith in the Son of God as personal Saviour from sin and its guilt. However, God has given His Word to men, and capacity to comprehend it by the Spirit's power. The healthy and vigorous Christian will seek to learn all that he can of the wisdom of God's grace and mercy.

In the pursuance of this great subject, having ourselves examined well over one hundred Scripture passages which allude to the atonement in one phase or another, and having read something like a quarter of a million words relative to it, we are the first to admit that a doctrine of such magnitude cannot be treated comprehensively, or even partially so, in the space at our disposal. But if we can set before the reader some necessary and apparent conclusions derived from the Word of God concerning this doctrine, and by this means whet the appetite for a fuller consideration of the subject, and above all, cause a deeper understanding of and love for the perfection of God's matchless Son and His atoning sacrifice of Himself, we shall be more than satisfied.

We purpose, therefore, to examine the doctrine of the Atonement within the compass of three propositions.

1. The Fact of the Atonement

The word *atonement* means *the satisfaction or expiation made for wrong*. Biblically, it involves *the voluntary, substitutionary, vicarious, propitiatory, expiatory, sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for sin, to reconcile us to God*.

As the premise of this section of our discussion, we shall admit as facts two truths that we shall discuss in more detail later: (1) that man is a sinner and has come short of the glory of God, for His Word says so (Rom. 3:23); (2) that the law and righteousness of God demand the death of the sinner (Rom. 6:23), the only means of remission being the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22). The whole race is lost and guilty before God.

The very first case of human sin found in the Bible, the disobedience of Adam and Eve, was dealt with by God through the shedding of blood to provide coats of skins to cover their nakedness. Thus, symbolically, the blood sacri-

fice for sin was made at the outset of man's history. The Levitical sacrifices later instituted show clearly the necessity of blood for the remission of sin, confirmed in one of the greatest verses of the Bible, Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The Old Testament sacrifices, however, made a covering for sin until the Lamb of God should come, whose blood shed by men should make, as the Antitype, remission for the sins of the world. His was the perfect sacrifice, of which the Levitical offerings were but symbols. It is through Him and His death that sin has been expiated, as we shall see.

Christ's sacrifice of Himself for sin is the theme of much more that is written in the Old Testament. Of this suffering Servant Isaiah wrote, prophesying of Him and His atoning work in the fifty-third chapter, when he declared: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (53:6). The historic, the poetic, and the prophetic books all allude to the Atonement; in fact the stream of scarlet runs from Genesis to Malachi as well as from Matthew to Revelation.

Looking at the New Testament we find our Lord, in the four Gospels, speaking again and again of His death. He is introduced at the outset of His ministry by John the Baptist as "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Henceforth He declares clearly and unmistakably the purpose of His coming, "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). We cite several other statements of His, without comment. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14). "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"

(John 10:11). "The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

Turning to the Epistles, in which so much of our Christian doctrine is revealed, we find many references to the atoning work of Christ. We quote not a few passages, and without comment. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). "Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2:13, 14). "He [God] hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). "[He] was delivered for our offences" (Rom. 4:25). "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:28). "Now once in the end of the age hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7; cf. Col. 1:14). "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

We have cited at random fourteen passages applying to the death of Christ. There are more than one hundred other verses in the New Testament that would pertain equally well to our purpose—to prove that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is taught in the Bible. Only a dishonest reader of God's Word can doubt the *fact* of the atonement.

2. The Necessity for the Atonement

In view of the evidence that Christ died for the guilt and remission of sins, we need to consider two factors: (1) why sins need to be remitted; and (2) in what respect Christ's death atones for human sin.

To discuss these matters intelligently, we must bear in mind the character of God. He is altogether holy and righteous (Lev. 11:44). His character demands a law of righteousness. If His laws are not righteous, but unrighteous; if His judgments are not holy, but unholy; if He condones the evil and condemns the good—then He is not God.

Now sin is lawlessness. It came into being through Satan's rebellion (Isa. 14:12-14), and into the world by his subsequent temptation of Eve, and our first parents' disobedience to God's revealed will. Since God is omniscient, He cannot be ignorant of sin. Knowing that sin exists, there are but three potentialities in respect to God's attitude toward it (and inasmuch as He is God, we shall see that actually the three potentialities are limited to one). For the sake of argument, however, let us assume that God could respond in three ways: (1) He could ignore sin; (2) He could condone sin; and (3) He could judge sin. Were He other than He is, there might be some value in discussing the first two propositions. But perfect righteousness can neither ignore nor condone that which is unrighteous. Therefore, in the light of God's character, He cannot ignore, He cannot con-

done sin. Consequently the three potentialities resolve themselves into one—*God must judge sin.*

From the beginning, in His infinite wisdom, God decreed that the wages of sin is death. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17; cf. Rom. 6:23). God's judgment upon sin is death, death beyond the physical—spiritual death, separation from God, of which physical death is a shadow. Since the life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11), the shedding of blood speaks of death. Thus it is written: "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

Since all men have sinned and the wages of sin is death, it holds that all must die, or a substitute of equal or greater value for remission must be found. For God, because of His very righteousness, cannot forgive sin unless its penalty is paid. He cannot pardon, for He is a judge; a judge must either condemn or acquit. But condemnation has already been written over sin: *death*. Human illustrations, at best, are poor things to clarify divine truths, but we shall venture one here. Let us suppose that a young man, who has committed murder, is brought up for trial in court. There are witnesses who saw him commit the crime, and he himself has admitted his guilt. He is tried by jury, and is declared guilty of murder in the first degree, in a state where its penalty is death by electrocution. It is time for the judge to pronounce the sentence. Now this being a hypothetical case, we shall also assume that the judge is a relative of the young criminal, let us say, his father. The murderer is now led before the judge, who says: "John Smith, you have been tried and found guilty of murder in the first degree. In this state the penalty for your premeditated crime is death in the

electric chair. But I love you, and I am merciful. Therefore, I forgive you. You are free." Such a judge would not last very long. Why? Because he is kind? No; but because he is not just. He has ignored the transgression of the guilty sinner and its just penalty. Such dealings with sin are not righteous. The judge must impose the prescribed penalty for the crime.

In all reverence we say that God is in a like position. Surely He is no less righteous than His holy and inflexible law. No matter how great His love, no matter how rich His mercy—and both are infinite and matchless—the penalty for sin must be paid. Thus, were it not for His divine wisdom, all would be hopeless for mankind. But in the eternal past, before the foundation of the world, in the counsels of the Godhead it was determined that atonement should be made by another, the Son of God (Acts 2:23). God so loved the world that He gave His Son, who left Heaven's glory, divesting Himself of the glory that was His, and took upon Himself the form of a Servant, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (John 3:16; Phil. 2:5-8). He who Himself was perfect, without spot or blemish, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). On Him was laid "the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). In such a way atonement was made. He became the propitiation for our sins, and also for the whole world (1 John 2:2). A loving and merciful God was able, through the blood that was shed on the Cross, to forgive and cleanse guilty sinners, because the penalty was assumed and met voluntarily by the divine Substitute. Sin was expiated at Calvary. The sacrifice of the Son of God was the vicarious offering for sin by which God's righteous demand was satisfied. Through His blood we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, for He suffered for them, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 3:18).

But how could the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He is God, was yet but one Man on earth—how could He be the Substitute for many? It is because of who He is—not simply because He is God, though surely that, but also because of His place in the Godhead. For He is more than Head of the Church; He is the Head of all creation (Col. 1:15-17). By Him all things were created, and for Him; and by Him all things consist. It is He who, in the creation of man, endowed him with free will, to worship God or to rebel against Him, to obey or to disobey. Mankind, which belongs to Him, revolted against Him. But His was the right to redeem it, to purchase it back to Himself. He, as man's Creator, could be man's Representative—and this He became at Calvary. There, because of sin, He was separated from God, as the penalty demanded of sin by divine justice fell upon Him. So He cried in anguish: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). Just as surely as He hung there, just as surely as our iniquity was laid upon Him, so equally sure is it that there the communion and fellowship of all eternity and ages past were broken. Forsaken of God, the penalty of death for sin was met as He suffered there, the Just for the unjust. Because of who He is, the spotless perfection of His Being, His Deity, this separation *must* have carried all the weight of spiritual death, the full punitive demand of God's righteous judgment. Thus the divine Son was the world's Representative in judgment, by which He became the propitiation for the whole world, to reconcile us to God.

In Christ's death the old creation, with its sin, was put aside, and the redeemed are a new creation in Him (2 Cor. 5:17). The Atonement was not made to restore the old Adam condition, but, in the Last Adam, to effect an altogether new position for us, that of acceptance in the Beloved into new life, imparted by the Spirit to all those who are

identified with the Lord in death and resurrection, by faith. And that God's justice has been satisfied by the vicarious sacrifice of the Son has been made manifest in that Christ was raised from the dead, and is exalted and seated at the right hand of the Throne of God (Phil. 2:9; Col. 3:1). The resurrection was the seal of approval, the sign of acceptance of Christ's death. Had the offering been imperfect, then the seal would not have been given. And if Christ had not been raised, then we should yet be in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17). But our faith is not vain, for He arose.

3. The Unlimited Scope of the Atonement

That there is a distinction between atonement and redemption seems very clear. It is quite true that redemption is through the shed blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18, 19; Eph. 1:7), and it is also true that redemption, as atonement, is an accomplished fact—the work is done. What is the difference, then? If both are through the shedding of blood, are they not one and the same? The difference is that the Scripture clearly declares that the atonement was for the whole world, while no line of Scripture can be found to state that redemption is for all. Redemption is an accomplished thing, it is salvation through the blood of Christ, but it is not for the whole world.

We have quoted 1 John 2:2 before: "And He [Jesus Christ the Righteous] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." Propitiation is atonement; it is for all. In 1 Timothy 2:5, 6, the Apostle Paul writes: "For there is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." That Christ died for all is the message of the Gospel, and by His death He made atonement for the whole world, whom God so loved that He gave His Son, not willing that any should perish (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 2:2; John 3:16;

2 Peter 3:9). The provision of the atonement is most surely for all, unlimited in its scope.

On the other hand, redemption is conditioned by faith. Hear the Apostle Paul: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man [Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things" (Acts 13:38, 39). While God's love reached out to the whole world to such an extent that He gave His only begotten Son, remember the condition of salvation: "that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life." Like Scriptures abound. We cite a few: "He that *believeth on Him* is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18); "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31); "Therefore being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access *by faith* into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1, 2); "For by grace are ye saved *through faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Redemption, salvation, forgiveness of sins, the imputed righteousness of God, are through Christ and His shed blood, upon all them that believe.

The provision of the atonement is for all. The teaching of Scripture regarding the propitiation made through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God means no less than that He died for all, if words mean anything. But the efficacy of the atonement is conditioned upon faith. The atonement is unlimited in scope, it is available for all; but all do not avail themselves of it. If all the world would receive Christ's sacrifice in faith, all the world would be redeemed. But some have rejected and do reject the Son of God. For those who are rejecting Him today, unless they

repent, it is as if He had not made atonement, and they will die in their sins. But for all who believe, who will believe, redemption has been accomplished, through the precious blood of Christ. Ponder these words, and if need be, act upon them.

The power of the atonement lies in itself, and not in the doctrine of it, nor in our explanation of that doctrine. It is the fact of Christ's death, and our personal faith in Him and His sacrifice for sin, that brings salvation to us—so that we glory in the Cross of Christ, which to the world is foolishness, but to us, the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18). Yes, let us never undervalue the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. For it is not His miraculous birth that is the power of God unto salvation, nor His baptism by John, nor His temptation, nor His miraculous deeds, nor His matchless words, nor His transfiguration, nor His entry into Jerusalem, nor His agony in Gethsemane. It is His shameful and vicarious death for sin by which we are redeemed. The biographies of other men rarely touch upon their deaths; it is their deeds, their lives, that are told. But of the Son of God—though His works were mighty and His life perfect—those who wrote His record consumed more space upon His death than on any other subject. Nearly one-third of the four Gospels is occupied with the last week of His earthly life, as He prepared to give His life a ransom for many, and moved steadfastly to the cruel Cross. Why? Because, while all He ever said or did enriches His death, it is by that death that mankind is eternally enriched. Thus it is our privilege, and to His and our eternal glory, to believe and proclaim "Christ and Him crucified."

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

That the Apostles and writers of the New Testament believed in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be and is not disputed. Even a cursory reading of the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation will establish this fact beyond the shadow of doubt. It is not that the early Church did not believe in Christ's resurrection that skepticism and modern thought would try to persuade us, but that the early Church was mistaken in its conviction, or that by the word *resurrection* it meant spiritual rather than physical resurrection.

Let us establish at the very outset of this treatise, therefore, that the New Testament doctrine of resurrection, as it applies to the resurrection of Christ and to our own, has to do with resurrection of the body. There is no ambiguity about it whatever. The spirit of our Lord did not go into the grave; it was His body: and it was His body that was raised. It was not a spirit that walked along the road to Emmaus with two disciples. Nor was it a spirit that stood in the midst of His followers in a room in Jerusalem and said: "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke 24:39). Likewise, the hope of our own resurrection is that our bodies will be raised, and this is the New Testament teaching. We cite two verses in substantiation of this statement: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from [among, *lit.*] the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11); and, "Who [the Lord Jesus Christ] shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned

like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21; *free translation*).

It should be understood, therefore, that in all our references hereafter to the resurrection we are speaking of bodily quickening, and nought else. That this implies at once that the resurrection of Christ, in fact, any resurrection, is miraculous is freely acknowledged. We do not evade the issue. But we do not limit God. The resurrection of Christ was a demonstration of His mighty power, with whom nothing is impossible (Eph. 1:19-21; Luke 1:37). Natural laws do not restrain Almighty God, for He is Supernatural.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a trivial and inconsequential appendage to Christianity, to be accepted or rejected at will. It is an integral part of the Christian faith, and without it there is no Christian faith. This the New Testament affirms: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:14, 17); and thus we hold. If Christ arose, the Gospel is gloriously true. If He did not arise bodily, our faith is bound up in a tissue of lies, in cunningly devised fables, and our hope is but a fabric of dreams which will end forever at death.

It is our purpose, therefore, to examine the witness of the Scriptures to Christ's resurrection, and to answer the objections of cynical men who appraise their own intellectuality and reasoning to be above and more reliable than the clear testimony of the Word of God. We shall see, I believe, that not only is the bodily resurrection of Christ taught in the Bible, but that by every law of evidence and logic it is the most completely and irrefutably established historic fact in the annals of the human race. Our considerations will fall into five divisions.

1. Predictions as to Christ's Resurrection

Before we look at the Old Testament, suppose we refresh our memories as to Christ's own predictions of His resurrection, for repeatedly He announced that He would die, that for this cause He came to earth, and that He would be raised again. In Matthew 12:40 it is recorded that He said: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." In Mark 8:31 it is written: "And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again." Luke 18:33 reports His words: "And they shall scourge Him [the Son of Man], and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again." While John 2:19, 21 declares: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He spake of the temple of His body." (Additional references are: Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 26:32; Mark 9:31; 10:34; 14:28; Luke 9:22.) Every one of the four Evangelists testifies to our Lord's prophecies concerning His resurrection.

We have already observed, in our Lord's reference to Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale (Matt. 12:40), allusion to an Old Testament prediction by type to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and, of course, the most important Old Testament foreshadowing of Christ's resurrection is that of Isaac (see Gen. 22 and Heb. 11:17-19). But we have other revelation concerning the Old Testament prophecies of His resurrection.

When the risen Lord was talking with the two Emmaus disciples, who were puzzled by the events of those momentous days, He said to them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25-27). They had just been speaking of the reports of Christ's resurrection when He uttered these words. If Moses and all the prophets testified of His passion experiences, and that Messiah must enter into His glory, the Old Testament writers proclaimed the resurrection—for how could He enter into His glory if He were dead?

When the Apostle Paul stood before Agrippa, he said: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26:22, 23). From the lips of the Lord Jesus and by the tongue of the Apostle Paul the fact that the Old Testament predicted the resurrection of Christ was declared—that Moses and the prophets foretold it. We cite several examples.

First, what did Moses have to say regarding Christ's resurrection? We know, of course, that the tabernacle of old, and the feasts of Israel, were given as types to show forth the Redeemer. Moses was the writer of the Pentateuch, and in the book of Leviticus, in the twenty-third chapter, the feasts of Jehovah are set forth. The first of these is the Passover, which speaks of Messiah's redemptive work (vss. 4, 5); the second is the feast of Unleavened Bread, typifying communion with the Redeemer (vss. 6-8); and the third, the feast of Firstfruits, typical of Messiah's resurrection (vss. 9-14). Thus Moses prophesied concerning Christ's resurrection; it was to this feast that Paul alluded in 1 Corinthians 15:23.

Second, we shall quote some of David's writings. We do not usually think of David as a prophet, but as a king. Nevertheless, under the Spirit's guidance he penned pro-

phetic words in reference to Messiah, as we shall observe. In the twenty-second Psalm, in which the suffering of the Son of David is so graphically pictured, we find, beginning in verse 22, clear intimation of His resurrection. In fact, this verse begins: "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren," strangely anticipatory of that which our Saviour uttered among His first words to Mary Magdalene upon His resurrection: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20:17).

The sixteenth Psalm is Messianic. And it was this Psalm that the Apostle Peter referred to under the Spirit's leading on the day of Pentecost. Quoting verses 8-11 he said: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hades, neither His flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:29-31). Paul also made use of this Psalm (Acts 13:35).

We submit another passage in the Psalms as profitable to our study. David writes, in the second Psalm: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (vs. 7). It is this prophecy that the Apostle Paul used to substantiate his contention in Antioch, of Pisidia, that Christ was raised according to the Scriptures, saying: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts 13:32, 33).

As a final Old Testament prediction of Christ's resurrection we turn to one of the prophets, Zechariah. In the thirteenth chapter of his prophecy he speaks of a future day when the remnant of Israel will prophesy of Messiah. This will be during the Tribulation. The Lord then returns in power, and we read: "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends" (vs. 6). This is He of whom it is written in Zechariah 12:10 that "they shall look on Me whom they have pierced." If these are not predictions that Christ would be raised, then how and in what way would He bear the marks of His suffering?

Some may object to our suggestions as to Old Testament prophecies concerning the resurrection of Christ, arguing that in all but one of the instances referred to we have accepted the Apostles' interpretation of their meaning as final. Let us ask four questions. (1) Who is better qualified to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures than were those who lived by them and were ready to die to maintain the truth of their interpretations? (2) Can anyone deny the unanswerable logic of the arguments proposed by these interpretations? (3) If the passages cited do not allude to Christ's resurrection, to what do they refer? And (4) if the Holy Spirit was able to cause David to predict the agony of Christ's suffering on the Cross, as he did in Psalm 22, one thousand years before the event took place and centuries before death by crucifixion was known, why could He not also cause the Psalmist to predict Christ's resurrection?

The Old Testament prophesied and Christ Himself predicted that after His death He would be raised again. If He was not raised, therefore, the Scriptures are false, and He Himself did not tell the truth. But He was raised, as we shall see.

2. The Fact of Christ's Resurrection

There are certain laws of evidence which hold in the establishment of any historic fact. There must be documentation of the event in question made by reliable contemporary witnesses. If, in addition, some memorial begun at the time of the event and continuously celebrated since, be in existence, so much the better. For example, if someone were to suggest today that Abraham Lincoln never lived and that the President of the United States during the Civil War was a man by the name of William Jones, his testimony would bear no weight. He would have to produce documentary evidence to that effect, and he would be obliged to disprove the evidence that we already have in hand. For there is ample contemporary literature to establish that Lincoln was the sixteenth President of the United States, that he held office from 1861-65 during the Civil War. And further, we have observed for years the memorial of his birthday, February 12th, and there is more than one monument to Abraham Lincoln, some of them dating back to shortly after his assassination.

Now, in regard to the resurrection of Christ, let us investigate the qualifications of the witnesses and the quality of their testimony. There are six outstanding contemporaries of our Lord's earthly life who have given us documentation concerning His death, burial, and resurrection; namely, the four Evangelists, and the Apostles Peter and Paul.

Two of the writers of the Gospels, Matthew and John, were among the twelve disciples. Thus, they were in the Jerusalem room where the risen Lord is said to have appeared on two occasions (John 20:19-29). We know that according to his own record John was one of those who saw Him again at Galilee (John 21:2ff), and it is clear that both he and Matthew are included among those who accompanied Christ

to the ascension mount (Luke 24:46-52). These men testified to things which they had seen with their own eyes, heard with their own ears, and touched with their own hands (cf. 1 John 1:1-3).

The other two Evangelists, Mark and Luke, though they were not among the Twelve, were careful and reliable witnesses. John Mark lived in Jerusalem at the time of the momentous events he recorded. He was a nephew of Barnabas, and a companion to both Paul and Peter. It appears that he was Simon Peter's son in the faith (1 Peter 5:13), and it is thought by many, the author included, that Peter was Mark's factual source for the Second Gospel, which was termed by some of the ancient historians *The Petrine Gospel*. At any rate, John Mark assuredly was in a position to know what he was writing about, and his testimony can be considered authentic in view of his proximity to the events told therein. As for Luke, while we do not know that he ever saw the Lord Jesus, we have his own assertion that he did not set forth his record of the things which he wanted his friend Theophilus to know with certainty, until he had traced them closely (Luke 1:1-4). The fact that Luke is acknowledged by scholars to have been one of the ablest historians who ever lived qualifies him as a reliable documentor.

Regarding the two apostles, Simon Peter is said to have seen the risen Christ on several occasions (Luke 24:34; John 21:15; 1 Cor. 15:5), while the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, where he saw the Lord in glory (Acts 9:1-8), is too well known to need comment.

All six of these men, who declare unequivocally that Christ arose, were either eye-witnesses or closely associated with the events which they recorded. They were so thoroughly convinced of the truth of that which they held that it not only changed the course of their lives, but they were ready to die for—as indeed at least two of them did—their

faith in Christ and His resurrection. They were not men of doubtful character, but it may safely be asserted that the influence of every one of them has been for good, yes, for greater good, through a longer period of time than of any men who ever lived, with one or two possible exceptions. From the aspect of the qualifications of the witnesses to testify, there is nothing to be desired. Were these men liars? Were they prey to hallucinations? Or did they tell the truth? What was the quality of their testimony?

For the time being, suppose we omit the so-called discrepancies in the accounts of the resurrection morning. There are certain details in which the four Evangelists, who have given us the history of that day, are entirely agreed. Without exception they record that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, that He was buried, that on the third day the tomb was empty, that angelic beings testified that He was risen, and that He was seen by His disciples and certain others (Matt. 27:33-28:20; Mark 15:24-16:20; Luke 23:27-24:53; John 19:16-21:25). To these facts no contradictions can be found, and they are the essential facts of the case, after all.

No one questions the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is there doubt concerning the entombment of His body in the rock-hewn sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, who was a secret disciple of the Lord's, a counsellor, who is said to have been just, good, and rich. It is Christ's resurrection that is assailed. But on the morning of the third day the tomb was empty! If He were not raised, how was His body taken out of the tomb, which was watched over, at the request of His enemies, by a Roman guard (Matt. 27:62-66)? And if He were not raised, where was His body? The answers to these questions have eluded the critics of the Bible, the unbeliever and die-hard rationalists of all the centuries. If Christ did not arise, let them show what happened to His body. The very care which the Pharisees took to see to it

that the body could not be removed is the richest evidence we have to the resurrection. Had the guards not been placed at the door of the sepulchre, had the stone not been sealed, even though the enemies of Christianity might not be able to produce the body of the Lord or prove what happened to it, they might cast reasonable doubt upon the significance of the empty tomb. But they have not a leg to stand on—the stone was sealed, the sepulchre was guarded; yet on the third day, the tomb was empty.

But the case for the resurrection of Christ does not rest there. For there is further positive evidence to the fact that He was raised. For He was seen of men. We have it on the word of trustworthy witnesses. Matthew saw the risen Christ, for he says so (Matt. 28:16, 17). Peter saw Him, for Mark declares it, as does John (Mark 16:7, 14; John 21:3ff), and Peter later affirms it (1 Peter 1:3). John saw the Lord after He was raised, for so he testifies (John 21). Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul, saw Him in glory, of which he gives ample testimony (1 Cor. 15:8; cf. Acts 9:1-7; 22:1-16; 26:9-18). He was seen first of all by Mary Magdalene, and then by the other women; also by Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and the others; by Cleopas and the second Emmaus disciple; and by more than five hundred believers at one time (see 1 Cor. 15:3-18).

It was not a spirit that these men and women beheld, but it was Christ in His resurrection body. They saw the scars of His suffering. They touched Him (Matt. 28:9). They watched Him break the bread. They saw Him partake of broiled fish and honeycomb. (See Luke 24:30, 39, 40, 42, 43.) A spirit has not flesh and bones. A spirit does not bear scars. A spirit cannot be handled. A spirit cannot break bread. A spirit does not partake of food.

In addition to the testimony of their words there remains the witness of the lives of these men henceforth. Peter, the

former coward, faced all Jerusalem at one time and the Sanhedrin shortly thereafter and gave witness to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:24; 4:10). Matthew and John recorded for all to see, their faith in this stupendous truth, yet they, too, had forsaken the Lord Jesus and fled, at the time of His arrest and trial. Saul of Tarsus changed from a bitter and zealous persecutor of Christianity to its outstanding evangelist and teacher through his experience on the Damascus Road. There is no answer to the actions of these men except one thing—Christ, whom they thought to be dead, to have failed, or, in the case of Paul, to be an imposter, was raised. Nothing less could have wrought such an alteration and revolution in their lives and careers.

But there is still other testimony to Christ's resurrection—they are the monuments to the event which prove it, for they have come down to us over a period of nineteen centuries. One of them is the Church itself. The early preaching of the Apostles bound together with the Christian faith acceptance of the resurrection. In its beginnings, and throughout the years (criticism to the contrary) the Resurrection of Christ has been, with His Deity, His Virgin Birth, and His Atoning Sacrifice, a fundamental of fundamentals, and faith in it the hope of our salvation. For a dead Saviour cannot save. But a living Saviour is God the Son, declared so "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

The second memorial which proves that He was raised is the Church's observance of the Lord's Day, the first day of the week. From of old the nation Israel, at God's command, had observed the Sabbath, the seventh day. But the early Christians, Israelites and faithful to God, without command or precedent began to assemble for worship on the first day of the week, the day on which Christ was raised (e.g., Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). This started shortly after the resurrection, and not before; it continues till this day.

The first day of the week, the Lord's Day, did not become the day of worship because Christ's body remained in the grave. Christians adopted it because on that day the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the grave, conqueror of Satan, and sin, and death.

Either Christ did or He did not arise from the dead. There is no middle ground. And the qualifications of the witnesses to His resurrection, and the quality of their testimony, are reliable, convincing, and sure; the witnesses are above reproach, and their testimony is thorough and irrefragable. It is only wilful and deliberate unbelief that, weighing the evidence, can reject it.

3. The Nature of Christ's Resurrection Body

Bound as we are by limitations of natural senses and human experience, it is easier perhaps to accept in faith the phenomenon of Christ's resurrection body than to understand its mystery. But that is not surprising. The angels of God, before man was ever created, would not have been able, we suppose, to visualize what man's natural body would be like. And yet we have more to construct in our thoughts than they had, for certain characteristics of our Lord's resurrection body are made known in the Scriptures.

A careful reading of the Gospel accounts will reveal: (1) that Christ's resurrection body was material—it was composed of flesh and bones, and it could be handled (Luke 24:39); (2) that it was identified with His pre-resurrection body, for it bore the scars of His wounds (John 20:27); (3) that it existed in the same human form that it had before—Christ was known by His disciples (John 20:20). He appeared like other men to the two from Emmaus (Luke 24:13ff), and Mary Magdalene, before she recognized Him as the Lord, thought Him to be the gardener (John 20:15);

and (4) that it was changed: (a) there were times when He was not recognized (Luke 24:16; John 20:14, though in the former instance it is said that it was the disciples' eyes that were holden); and (b) it could appear or disappear at will, unbound by space or walls (Luke 24:31; John 20:19, 26).

His present resurrection body still retains the scars of His suffering (Zech. 13:6; Rev. 5:6). It is a glorious body, or better, a body of glory (Phil. 3:21), and it is such a body that we, too, shall have, when He comes to take His blood-bought Bride to Himself. Then, seeing Him, we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). Our bodies of humiliation will be changed like unto the body of His glory. Sown as natural bodies, we shall have spiritual bodies. Now corruptible, we shall put on incorruption; now mortals, we shall put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:44, 53, 54). All the acquired glory of the God-Man we shall share with Him, and the body of His glory, His mysterious and glorious body, is the pattern of the bodies that we shall possess also in the day of redemption for which we wait (Rom. 8:23).

4. Objections to and Theories Concerning Christ's Resurrection

It seems that there are some who will believe anything but the Bible. "The god of this age hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). The lengths to which such men will go to disbelieve what God has wrought* and His ser-

*The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was the work of the Triune God. (1) It is attributed to God the Father: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24; cf. Eph. 1:17-20). (2) God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, claimed that power for Himself, thus manifesting His Deity: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have

vants have witnessed to, shows their hardness of heart; it issues in unreasonableness, illogical theories, and fantastic credulity in contrast to simple faith.

As a necessary part of this treatise, therefore, we shall discuss some of the most prominent objections to and theories concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Critics of the Bible seize upon certain discrepancies in the four Gospel accounts as proof that Christ did not arise. For example, because Matthew records that one angel spoke to the two Marys, while Luke tells us that two angels appeared to several women, and John places the interview of two angels with Mary at still another time, there are those who would deny the whole resurrection story. There are also other so-called contradictions in the accounts. Unbelief would reject the evidence even if every detail agreed wholly. They would then say that the four Evangelists collaborated in promoting a fraud.

No two witnesses of any event will see every particular in the same light. Hear two friends describe an accident, and see if they do not disagree on certain minutiae. Yet each may be giving an accurate description, from his eyes. The Holy Spirit used human instruments to write the Word of God. Their personalities were not lost in their work, but they were kept from error. And we can say without equivocation that there is no error in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection morning. There were two angels; of the two, one was the spokesman, and was remembered particularly by the historians. The combined records will dovetail perfectly under careful examination.† All of the

power to take it again" (John 10:17, 18; cf. John 2:19-21). And (3) it is written of God the Holy Spirit: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11; cf. 1 Peter 3:18).

†We give here a suggested order of events: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, set out for the tomb bearing spices:

accounts, as we have stated earlier, agree in the essential facts—that Christ's body was placed in the tomb, that on the third day the tomb was empty, and that the risen Lord was seen by many witnesses.

In our home the other day we noticed the odor of gas. So we called the plumber, who investigated and made necessary repairs. Just before he left I spoke to him in the cellar. "Did you find a leak?" I asked him. He replied, "Yes, a big one." When he was getting into his car, my wife, who did not know I had talked with him, said: "I hope you found the leak." "Indeed, I did," was his response, "two of them. The valve had come loose, and there was a small hole in the pipe." There we have two different accounts of what the plumber found, both given by the same man, both of them true. He told me what I wanted to know. He gave my wife some added information. By the logic of the Bible critics, because the two accounts do not agree, there was no odor of gas, no leak at all, but the plumber was lying in both instances. Unbelief can hammer at the resurrection story indefinitely, and it will do so; but it cannot break the chain of trustworthy evidence by which Christ's resurrection is established.

Among the theories suggested to take the place of truth is what is known as "the swoon theory," in which it is proposed that Christ did not die on the Cross, but that He only fainted. The Roman soldiers thought He was dead, and so He was taken down from the Cross and placed in

and were followed by the other women. The first three found the stone rolled away (Mark 16:4), and Mary Magdalene went to tell the disciples (John 20:1, 2). Meanwhile Mary the mother of James, and Salome, went back to meet the other women. During this time Mary Magdalene found Peter and John, who came running to the sepulchre, looked in, and went away (John 20:3-10). Mary Magdalene returned weeping; the risen Lord spoke to her (John 20:11-18), and she went to tell the disciples, as He bade her. The other Mary, and the rest of the women, then arrived, and when they had also left to tell the disciples, they saw the Lord Jesus (Matt. 28:5-10).

the tomb. On the third day it was not a risen Christ that His disciples saw, but a Man who had awakened from His swoon. Imagine scholarship submitting such a tale! The Roman soldiers would know a dead man when they saw him. And even if not, if our Lord only swooned, how did He get out of the tomb? Supposing He made Himself heard and was released from the sepulchre by the guard, why, then, did the enemies of Christ tell the soldiers to say the body had been stolen? And how would a man who had been pierced with nails and with a spear, who had been wrapped in grave clothes and placed in a tomb, be able to walk about in full strength a few days thereafter? In fact, how can anyone with intelligence suggest such a theory?

But there are other speculations. One of them is that those who said they saw the risen Christ had hallucinations. They thought they saw Him, but they only had visions, it is claimed. Well, if there were only one witness, this might hold. But eleven men do not have visions at the same time, and about the same thing. And what of the five hundred and more who saw Him at once (1 Cor. 15:6)? Were there five hundred hallucinations at one time, and all respecting the same Person? This conjecture can be dismissed without serious consideration.

Again, some have said that the women went to the wrong tomb, and others, that Joseph of Arimathea moved Christ's body to another sepulchre after the entombment, for he did not want a man who had died a criminal's death on the Cross buried in his family vault. In regard to the first instance, imagine the women who loved the Lord Jesus, who followed when His dead body was taken to the sepulchre (Luke 23:55), forgetting where the grave was—not one of them forgetting, but all of them! We need not even ask what the angels were doing at the wrong tomb, or why the chief priests commanded the guards to tell an untruth about

the empty tomb, if it were the wrong one, and if the real tomb were still occupied.

Joseph of Arimathea was a just, honorable counsellor, as the records show. Did such a man take the body of the Lord elsewhere secretly, and then fail to tell the disciples? Did he allow a fraud to be perpetrated upon the followers of the Lord, and all the world, from a whim? Did he carry the body alone? If not, how did he buy the silence of his helpers? These two theories, as others that follow, are made up out of whole cloth. There is not a shred of evidence to support them. They are simply the speculations of frenzied men who will accept and perpetrate anything except the truth.

Finally, we shall examine for a moment the theory of the stolen body, for it is variously suggested that Christ's disciples, His enemies, and the Roman guard stole it and hid it. Supposing the disciples stole it—how did they get past the Roman guard? Where did their courage come from, who before had been so fearful that they deserted the Lord? Having stolen the body, then did these men purposefully invent the story of the resurrection, establish the faith and hope of the Christian Church on a known falsehood, begin meeting on the first day of the week, calling it the Lord's Day because Christ arose on that day, when He did not rise at all? From what we know of their lives, their witness, their writings, and their deaths, have we any right to suppose such knavery to be true? *Can* you believe that it is so?

Not His disciples, but His enemies, or the Roman guard stole the body, it is said. Let us suppose for an instant that the enemies of Christ, the elders and chief priests, stole the body and hid it. Then, when the tomb was found empty on the first day of the week, and resultantly their own seeming victory over Jesus of Nazareth turned, by widespread belief in His resurrection, to defeat, why did Christ's

enemies not produce the body? Had they done so, they could have nipped Christianity in the bud. There would be no Christian faith, for the faith is based on the fact that Christ, the Son of God, arose, that He lives, and that He is coming again one day.

If the Roman soldiers stole the body, then our knowledge of human nature and its love of life is amiss. For the penalty of defection while on duty, such defection as to steal the body that they were ordered to guard, was severe. It would have meant execution for every one of the soldiers who had a part in the disobedience, and nothing but bankrupt critical speculation would suggest such an idea, which does not hold.

We have not dealt with every theory proposed by the rationalists, but we have alluded to sufficient of them, the most widely accepted, to show their kind. They are based upon no evidence whatever. They are unreasonable. They are no easier to believe than the truth; less easy, in fact, because the truth is a supernatural revelation of a supernatural experience of a supernatural Person, the Son of God. If the Bible were to offer an account of the resurrection of Christ with as little evidence as the critics have produced for their theories, unbelief would laugh it to scorn, and with justice. If conservative scholarship would treat any subject in as unscholarly a way as the liberal scholars deal with Christ's resurrection, the liberals would brand the conservatives as morons. Even the critics themselves know that their case, or cases, have no standing, for they are constantly seeking some new theory, since they cannot themselves accept those that they have already proffered. But let them strike away with their chisels. They cannot do aught but dull their imperfect instruments against the impregnable rock of God's Holy Word. It has withstood and will continue to defy, resist, and put to flight, the most

fanatical and severe criticism that Satan can muster, but it is changeless. As to the evidence of Christ's resurrection that it bears, we reiterate that this is the most fully and indisputably established historic fact in the annals of the human race.

5. The Necessity and Meaning of Christ's Resurrection

Very briefly and merely by summation let us give consideration to the necessity for the resurrection of Christ. (1) It was necessary that He arise from the grave because He is the Son of God, with all power, and it was not possible that He should be holden of death (Acts 2:24). (2) It was necessary as proof to men that He was God the Son, for by His resurrection He was declared to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). (3) It was necessary in order that the Scriptures and His Word might be fulfilled. If He had not been raised, then His witness and that of God's Word are not true, and therefore we can believe no part of them. (4) It was necessary as a vindication of God's wisdom and holiness. The whole plan of salvation was based on the death and resurrection of the sinless Son of God. By His resurrection He has proved that God is Almighty and Satan a defeated foe. (5) It was necessary in order that believers in Christ might know that God's justice has been satisfied and they are justified (Rom. 4:25).

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is an essential of the Christian faith without which we are hopeless and lost. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). But He was raised, He did ascend, He is exalted on High, our Intercessor and Advocate at God's right hand. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

As to the meaning of His resurrection, it is this: because He lives, we shall live also. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor.

15:20). We need not wait for a future day, however, to be blessed and empowered and enriched through His life. He lives today within the hearts of His own. But when the glorious day of redemption comes when we shall be caught up to be with Christ, the dead in Him raised, a living generation raptured—when His shout is heard, and the trump of God, and all His own are brought in the air to meet Him, then we shall adorn bodies of glory like the body of His glory. It is assured. There is no doubt about it. He arose. His resurrection is the earnest of our resurrection, whose trust is in Him.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

CHAPTER IX

THE EXALTATION AND PRESENT WORK OF CHRIST

When our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was hanging upon the Cross, and just prior to His dismissing His spirit to the Father in Heaven, He cried out: "It is finished!" By His death for sin the work which He came to earth to do, that for which He left Heaven's glory, divesting and humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, was completed. The work of redemption was accomplished once and for all, so that nothing further whatever needed or needs to be done. Nothing further can be done. What was achieved by God the Son at Calvary was wrought out perfectly. "It is finished!"

The bodily resurrection of Christ was the proof that His death made perfect atonement for sin; His ascension in that physical body and His consequent exaltation were the reward that God bestowed upon Him for having laid aside His heavenly glory to become flesh and to give His life a ransom for men. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Today we do not yet see all things put under Him (Heb. 2:8). Nor has every knee in earth or under the earth yet bowed to Him. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). And exalted there on the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is seated awaiting and expecting the day of the Father's appointment when that which has already been wrought out will be consummated, when His

enemies—not only those who on earth defy and reject Him, but Satan and his angels, and sin, and death—will be made His footstool (Heb. 10:12, 13).

While the work of redemption is finished by Christ's one sacrifice, He has still a present work and a future work. His present work is linked up with His exaltation in Heaven now, and it is this phase of our Lord's ministry that constitutes our present study. Our considerations will fall into two major divisions.

1. The Fact of Christ's Exaltation

To establish the fact of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ we need only to point to what the Bible, the inerrant and unfailing Word of God, has to say on the subject. We can add nothing to God's revelation, nor need we do so.

We have already alluded to three passages of Scripture which speak of Christ's exaltation, namely: Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 2:9; and Hebrews 10:12, 13. We shall cite several other portions having to do with the same theme, but before we do so, we want to devote a paragraph to that which immediately preceded the exaltation of our Lord, that is, His ascension.

In Mark 16:19 we are told that after the Lord Jesus had spoken with His disciples as recounted in that chapter, "He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Of the same event Luke's Gospel tells us that He "was carried up into Heaven" (24:51). The fullest account of the ascension of Christ is found, however, in the Acts. There we read that our Lord "was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (1:9). What we should observe is that it was in His resurrection body that our Lord was caught up into Heaven. This was the body which went into the grave and was raised again—changed, glorified, but yet the same body. It bore the scars of His passion,

it could be seen and handled, it partook of food. It was the human body of Christ, but a body glorified. We shall see the purpose of these remarks in a moment.

Omitting the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's exaltation, we quote, now, four passages which declare it: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34); "Which He [God] wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from [among] the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23); "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24); and "Who [Jesus Christ] is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3:22).

Three times we are told that the risen Lord Jesus was taken up into Heaven. Seven times we have seen that this same Jesus has been exalted, crowned with glory and honor, set at the right of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, all being made subject to Him.

Mark, it is not the spirit of Jesus which is there, nor is it the Second Person of the Godhead adorned in His preincarnation glory. It is the Man in the glory—Jesus, the Christ of God, God the Son, our Saviour and Lord. He is there corporeally, in the body of His glory. It is He whom we know, who is the express Image of God. It is the One who

walked this earth in lowliness, full of grace and truth; the One who spoke words of peace and salvation to the afflicted and lost, who graciously touched the unclean leper, the eyes of the blind, and the tongues of the dumb; who healed the sick and the halt; who raised the dead; and who said: "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." To Him the highest place has been given. He has been exalted, to the glory of God the Father, and to His own unending praise and honor.

2. The Present Work of the Exalted Christ

Under the old covenant the high priest, after he had offered the sacrifice in the outer court of the Tabernacle, needed yet to enter within the veil and sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice upon the Mercy Seat, thus presenting it to God. Just so Christ, the perfect Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, having died for sin, passed through the heavens and presented Himself before the Throne of God. There He lives, the "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). But there are other reasons still, in addition to the fact that He had to fulfil the typology of the Old Testament as Antitype, why He had to ascend and be exalted. He had also to fulfil His promises—that He was going to prepare a place for His own (John 14:1-3); and that He might send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, that by Him He might indwell believers, and that the Spirit might be the Agent of conviction and the Guide into all truth (John 16:7-15). By Christ's exaltation the prophecies of the written Word and the living Word were fulfilled. In fact, as His redemptive work on Calvary would have no meaning for us had He not been raised, His keeping power would be naught without His Ascension. Reconciled by the death of Christ, we are saved by His life (Rom. 5:10)—His life in the glory. Because He is there we are kept.

Among the present activities of the risen and exalted Christ are two that are beyond the compass of this discussion, but should be mentioned in passing. First, in His glorified place all things are upheld by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3), and by Him all things consist (Col. 1:17). The suns, the planets, the constellations; the seasons; the universe itself and all that is in it, including this world's activities, are within His control. Embraced within this unlimited sphere is the second of these two works, for we find that angels and principalities and powers are subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). It is not revealed to us how He governs and controls in these respects, but only that He does so.

We know more about the other activities of the exalted Christ, and we shall examine them briefly. These offices are in relation to mankind, principally to His own blood-bought saints, and there are six in all: Mediator, Indweller, Bestower of Gifts, High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate. All of these activities are not always included in summations of the present work of Christ, it is true; yet they certainly do come within the scope of that which is effected through His exaltation. The former three might be said to apply earthward; and the latter three, heavenward.

A. The Exalted Christ Is the Mediator Between God and Men

This is the only present work of the glorified and exalted Christ that can be said to reach out to the world as a whole, and not only to believers in Him. It is written: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6). It might be argued by some that this does not apply to any but Christians, who are His by faith, and that this mediation refers to our Lord's present high-priestly work. But the context of the passage

cited refutes this theory, for in verse 4 it is said: "Who [God our Saviour] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." It is true, of course, that He is the Mediator for us who believe, but He is also the only Mediator between God and men. It is through His finished work on the Cross, and faith in Him and in what He has done for us, that men are saved. The work of redemption was accomplished nearly two thousand years ago, but the Man in the glory is still the one Mediator between God and men. Seated at the right hand of the Father He has sent the Comforter to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-11), and the Holy Spirit does so by pointing to the Son of God, who is at once the Saviour, Mediator, and Propitiation.

*B. The Exalted Christ Is the Indweller by the Holy Spirit**

We have ample evidence in Scripture to the fact that when we have been born again we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We cite several references. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, whom ye have of God?" (1 Cor. 6:19). "In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

How, then, do we say that Christ is the Indweller? It appears that the Third Person is the Agent of the Godhead in this, but His agency was made possible by the exaltation of the Second Person (John 16:7). It is by the Holy Spirit

*This aspect of the ministry of God to men is treated more fully in Chapter X, "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," pp. 115-138.

that our Lord dwells within the believer; who also is said to reside within, as, for example, "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), and "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Because the Man Christ Jesus arose from among the dead, ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the Father's right hand, He sent His Spirit to dwell within the children of God. Thus our daily walk on this earth is empowered by the living Saviour. Not only does He save us from sin's penalty, but from its power in this life. And by the Spirit He seals us forever.

Christianity is Christ—Christ dwelling within. By Him we have become partakers of the divine Nature, Himself (2 Peter 1:4).

C. The Exalted Christ Is the Bestower of Gifts to the Church

When we speak of the Church in this sense, we are not talking about the church organization as we see it on earth, but of the invisible Church, the great organism composed of all those who are members of His mystical Body, all whose trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever their denominational or undenominational affiliation.

In Ephesians 4:7-12, we are told: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on High, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It is not our purpose here to give an exposition of this passage. We simply remark that in it the gifts to the Church collectively are delineated (the gifts to individuals being found in 1 Corinthians 12), and these gifts to the Church as a whole are said to be made by the ascended and exalted Christ.

How the Church needs these gifts! Granted that the gifts of apostles and prophets ceased when the New Testament was completed, there are still evangelists, pastors, and teachers bestowed to the Body of Christ as necessary for the perfecting of the saints. And these gifts are not the same. The evangelist is for the extension of the Church, that it may be enlarged. The pastor is for the comfort and strengthening of the Church. The teacher is for its spiritual growth.

We come now to the final three aspects of Christ's present work, all of them mediatorial and high-priestly, those which we have termed His heavenward ministry.

D. The Exalted Christ Is the Christian's High Priest

As our Intercessor and Advocate the risen and exalted Lord acts in His capacity as our High Priest. But here we are thinking of a special function: that of presenting our worship and praise to God. "By Him [Jesus—vs. 12] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Heb. 13:15). All our services unto God, even our praise and worship, even our prayers, are imperfect; but as they are presented to God the Father by the Mediator, the Man in the glory, our High Priest, they are acceptable—accepted, as we ourselves are accepted, in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6).

E. The Exalted Christ Is the Christian's Intercessor

We have already stated that our Lord's Intercessory work comes within the realm of His high-priestly office in Heaven. This will be made clear as we examine some of the Scriptures having to do with this phase of His ministry on High.

In passing, it is well to remember that the present work of the Lord Jesus in the glory, excepting His mediation

between God and men in respect to their salvation, is on behalf of His own, and not for the world. For example, He is certainly not the Indweller of those who do not believe in Him, and assuredly not the bestower of gifts, in the sense delineated in Ephesians 4, to them who are deniers of His Name and work. So, also, He does not intercede for those who have rejected Him. In His great high-priestly prayer, recorded in John 17, this is made fully clear: "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine" (John 17:9).

Of our risen and ascended Lord's intercessory work we read in Romans 8:34 that He is "even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Again, we are told: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," that is, on our behalf whose trust is in Him (Heb. 9:24). Finally, we have the classic passage which relates to this subject, namely, Hebrews 7:24, 25: "But this Man [the Lord Jesus Christ], because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost [completely, without end] that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

What is this intercessory work of Christ? It is that He prays for us, He strengthens us along the way. In Hebrews 2:17, 18 we are told that it behooved the Son of God to be made like His brethren, in order that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He Himself having suffered being tempted, He is able to succor, to help us in our temptations. Our Lord knows our trials and our infirmities. He knows Satan's power, and all his wiles. He knows that in ourselves we are too frail, too weak, to withstand the blandishments of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And so, as He prayed for

Simon Peter that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:31, 32), He prays for us. Peter failed his Lord, but his faith did not fail. Simon's promises did not hold, but his faith in Christ did.

Today in the glory, at the right hand of God, is the Man Christ Jesus, our faithful and merciful High Priest. He knows all about every trial and temptation and heartache that come to us, and He is praying for us. "He ever liveth to make intercession" *for us*. He prays for us before the difficulty or test ever touches us; before we ever fail and fall He intercedes on our behalf. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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, sin apart. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16; *free translation*).

F. The Exalted Christ Is the Christian's Advocate

Not only does our High Priest who is seated at the Father's Throne pray for us before we sin, but He pleads for us when we do sin. He provides for us that we shall not sin; He indwells us by His Spirit to empower us against sin; He gives us His Word to be treasured in our hearts that we might not sin; He intercedes for us at the approach of sin; and He urges us to walk in the light as He is in the light, that we might have fellowship with the Father and with Himself. Every provision is made that we should not sin. This is the standard of Christian living. But then, if we do sin, He acts as our Advocate. He pleads our cause on the merit of His blood shed for the remission of sins.

"My little children," writes the Apostle John, "these things—[that which he has written in the passage before

this statement] write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2). The moment a child of God sins—for mark, Christ is our Advocate with the *Father*—his case is pled by the Advocate, who died for sin. He died for the sins of the world; certainly He will plead the cause of His own, who trust Him!

It is well to observe that Christ's advocacy is not said to be dependent upon our repentance or confession. It is not written, "If any man repent of his sin," or, "If any man confess his sins," that we have an Advocate with the Father—but, "If any man sin . . ." The moment sin is committed the moment Satan would accuse us before God (Rev. 12:10), the Father is reminded—though surely He needs no reminding!—of the blood that was poured out when our Lord became sin for us. Thus, in marvelous grace God has provided for His child who may die with unconfessed sin in his life. The Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous, has pled his cause. In grace He has restored that soul to the place of perfect righteousness, the righteousness of God in Himself.

But does it not say in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"? Is there not in this verse a condition for forgiveness and cleansing? Read the passage again, in connection with the first two verses of chapter 2, and you will see that this has to do with being restored to the place of fellowship—restoration and cleansing that bring us into the place of unbroken, unshadowed fellowship with the Father and the Son, walking in the light, and not in darkness. This cannot be until sin is confessed and we have been cleansed. The realization of the enormity of sin which to us may seem insignificant, and the cleansing which follows

confession, come through the Word of God. In our frailty we fail to search and try ourselves, but need to cry out: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23, 24). As the Word of God searches our hearts, so by the washing of water by the Word is the Christian cleansed (Eph. 5:26).

Christ's advocacy on behalf of His own is, like our being sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption, an assurance that we are eternally kept, eternally safe. Though we succumb to Satan again and again, though we are subject, in spite of our Lord's provision for us, to the same old weaknesses, failures, and sins, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Marvelous grace!—the Man in the glory is our Mediator, our High Priest, our Intercessor, and our Advocate.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

CHAPTER X

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before we discuss so vast a subject it will be well to clarify the term, "the Holy Spirit." It is the name or title of the Third Person of the divine Trinity, and is used of Him in the same signification that we refer to the First Person of the Godhead as "the Father," and the Second Person as "the Son."

The Scriptures do not confine themselves to the one name exclusively. There are two score or more titles given to the Holy Spirit, of which we mention but twelve, namely: the Spirit of God (Gen. 1:2), the Spirit of the Lord God (Isa. 61:1), the Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18), the Spirit of the Living God (2 Cor. 3:3), the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11), the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding (Isa. 11:2), the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), the Spirit of Holiness (Rom. 1:4), the Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2), the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14), the Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14); the Comforter (John 16:7), etc. The contexts in which these titles are found and their use make it very clear that they refer in every instance to one and the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead.

The word *spirit* is translated from the Hebrew *ruach* in the Old Testament, and from the Greek *pneuma* in the New Testament, both words meaning, literally, *breath* or *wind*. As the Second Person of the Trinity is called "the Word," because He is the Revealer of God, His Image, so the Third Person is referred to as "the Spirit," that is, the Breath, or Power of God. We prefer the name "the Holy Spirit" to "the Holy Ghost." The latter is found frequently in the Authorized Version. In the Greek it is exactly the same word as *spirit*, *pneuma*. *Ghost* is an Anglo-Saxon word, while

spirit comes over from the Latin *spiritus*. But present usage of the word *ghost* causes a fantastic and an eerie imagery to cross our mental screens, and so we discard the word for *spirit*.

Perhaps no other doctrine of the Bible has been perverted as frequently and as widely as the teaching regarding the Holy Spirit, sometimes deliberately and other times through misguidance and misunderstanding. We shall be particularly careful, therefore, to avoid theological speculations and emotional demonstrations in our discussion of the Work of the Holy Spirit, confining ourselves wholly to the Word of God, careful to compare Scripture with Scripture and to eschew formulating our interpretations from isolated passages of Holy Writ. Our considerations will fall into four major divisions.

1. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Personality is determined, as a rule, by the fact that the possession of intellect, sensibilities, and will. It is presupposed that to be a person one must have life; without life there can be no intellect, no sensibilities, no will. *Intellect* is the faculty of thinking and expressing thought; *sensibilities* has to do with the possession of feelings or emotions; while *will* is the ability to come to decisions and act upon them. The Holy Spirit is said to be the possessor of life (Rom. 8:2). The Spirit has intellect, for it is written, for example, that God has revealed certain things unto us "by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, 11). The Spirit possesses sensibilities, as well, for we are enjoined: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). And finally, the Holy Spirit is seen to make choice and act upon it, as among the prophets and teachers at Antioch. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,"

it is recorded in Acts 13:2, "the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And again, in discussing individual gifts given to believers by the Spirit, it is told that "all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:11). The Scriptures have not failed to answer the demands of the laws of logic and psychology by establishing within themselves that the essential faculties required of a personality are met in the Holy Spirit.

There are other Biblical evidences as to the personality of the Holy Spirit. Just as truly as the Father is a Person and as the Son is a Person, so is the Holy Spirit. The divine attributes ascribed to the First and Second Persons of the Holy Trinity are shared with equal authority by the Third Person also. The Holy Spirit is said to be Omniscient (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11). He is also declared to be Omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-10), Omnipotent (Luke 1:35), and Eternal (Heb. 9:14). When Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to God (Acts 5:3, 4), while again and again the activities of the Three Persons of the Godhead are interwoven. For example, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are each accredited with creation (Psa. 102:24, 25; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Job 26:13; Psa. 104:30).

The Holy Spirit, admittedly the power and efficiency of God, is more than mere power. He is an infinite and divine Person who is the agency of the power of God, the executive officer, as it were, of the Godhead. Proceeding from the Father and from the Son (John 14:16; 16:7), He is at the same time co-equal with Them, as many Scriptures will show.

Because He is a Person, it is wrong ever to refer to the Holy Spirit as "It." The masculine personal pronoun should always be employed when alluding to the Third Person of the Trinity—"He" and "Him." This is not followed in some of the English translations of the New Testament, but in the

Greek text it is the rule, even when such usage defies the accepted laws of grammar. For example, our Lord said, in speaking of the Spirit's coming: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *He* shall testify of Me" (John 15:26). Following the words "the Spirit" (*to pneuma* being neuter), we should logically and grammatically expect a neuter pronoun, "It." But our Lord made use of the masculine *ekeinos*, "He."

Further, the Holy Spirit refers to Himself as "I": "Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that *He* had said before, This is the covenant that *I* will make with them after those days, saith *the Lord*, I will put *My* laws into their hearts, and in their minds will *I* write them" (Heb. 10:15, 16; cf. Jer. 31:31-34). Here, in one passage of Scripture, we observe the writer to the Hebrews referring to the Spirit as "He"; the Spirit employing the personal pronoun of Himself in the first person singular, "I"; and the unity of the Trinity exemplified in the identification of the Holy Spirit as the Lord, a corroboration of His personality and Deity.

Sufficient evidence has been brought, we believe, to demonstrate the fact of the personality of the Holy Spirit, and that this Person is God the Holy Spirit. He is not to be spoken of as an abstract thing, as "It," nor thought of as a power and not a person. He is one with the Father and the Son, and, although His present ministry is not to speak of Himself (John 16:13-15), but to point us to the blessedness of the eternal Son, surely He is worthy of our reverence and adoration, as well as our obedience. It is dishonoring to the Person of the Godhead, and a denial of the clear teaching of His Holy Word, to deny the Spirit of God His rightful place and position in the divine Trinity. His glory must not be abased by man's designation, "Third Person"; He is co-equal with the Father and the Son.

2. The Work of the Holy Spirit Before Pentecost

Due, perhaps, to the general tendency on the part of human beings to be interested mostly in those things which directly affect themselves, too often we are inclined toward thinking of the Holy Spirit's work as it relates to us in this dispensation, as it pertains to us personally. Remembering Christ's promise that when He should depart He would send another Comforter (John 16:7), and His command to the Eleven to tarry in Jerusalem awaiting the Spirit's coming (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4), we forget, sometimes, that this was the advent of the Holy Spirit for His work in this particular age, while He and His ministry are eternal.

The activity of the Third Person of the Godhead is not confined to the Age of Grace, the Church Age. It is different in this dispensation from that of former times. Never before did He indwell and seal men and women of faith, as He does the believer in Christ now. But He has ever wrought a ministry to God and to man. His work is seen in creation, in revelation, in the incarnation, in sanctification, in resurrection, in regeneration, in intercession, and in the consummation, as we shall see. And it will be observed that the Spirit acts through the Word, and not apart from the Word.

A. The Spirit's Work in Creation

Inasmuch as above, as well as in a previous chapter, we have discussed this phase of the Spirit's work, we shall be brief, indeed. Both in the original creation and the re-creation the Third Person of the Godhead bore an active part. Three Scriptures will suffice to declare this: "By His Spirit He [God] hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13); "Thou [O Lord, vs. 24] sendest forth Thy Spirit, they [the riches of the universe and of the earth; the heavenly bodies above and the creatures below] are created: and Thou re-

newest the face of the earth" (Psa. 104:30); and, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:2, 3).

That the reason for these things is not wholly clear to our finite minds does not deny the fact of them. God has spoken and declared it so. In His infinite and perfect wisdom He accomplished the creation by triune power and activity. The Holy Spirit had a part in creation.

B. The Spirit's Work in Revelation

It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that we have the written Word of God, the Bible, in which God is revealed, in which His Son is revealed, as well as our redemption and eternal bliss. (This phase of the Spirit's ministry continued through to apostolic days.) No part of the Scripture, inscribed by the pens of men, was uninspired. Of old "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21), and the writings of them, as of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, were produced under the Spirit's power. Thus they were kept from error. Thus the whole counsel and purpose of God were revealed. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and the Holy Spirit was His power of revelation. The Scriptures are God-breathed, and the Spirit is the Breath of God.

C. The Spirit's Work in Former Dispensations

In addition to guiding the thoughts and hands of the prophets who gave us the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon the servants of God to endue them as God's messengers on special occasions. He did not indwell them, as in this dispensation, but as the mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha, so the Spirit of God fell upon and clothed His servants.

One or two examples will suffice as illustrations. In the Book of Numbers is recorded an experience which Moses had. He complained to the Lord, because of the murmuring of the people, that the burden was too heavy for him to bear alone. So the Lord instructed Moses to gather seventy men of the elders of Israel unto the tabernacle, and said: "And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone" (Num. 11:17). And God did so. Later, when Joshua complained to Moses because two of these elders were prophesying, and asked Moses to forbid them, Moses replied: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (vs. 29)!

Another passage, chosen at random out of many, tells of the message which the prophet Azariah had for Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, concerning the Lord's being with them, and further stating: "If ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." Azariah's preparation for the delivery of this message is seen in the very opening words of the account: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded" (2 Chron. 15:1).

The Holy Spirit came upon men in former dispensations to inspire the writing of Scriptures, and to endue with power to proclaim God's messages. He fell upon Gideon, and Saul, and David, and a host of others. He came also for services of other kinds, as when He translated Elijah, by a whirlwind, into Heaven (*cf.* 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:11).

But there was still another work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times. He caused God's servants to prophesy concerning the gift of Himself, the Spirit, to Israel as a nation. Observe to whom the promise of the Spirit was made of old—to the nation Israel. Nowhere in the Old Testament

do we find any allusion to the Gentiles being visited by the Spirit of God, of the Spirit's sealing of the believer in Christ, or of Jew and Gentile being united in one body by the Holy Spirit. These latter revelations are New Testament truth. They were not made known in former times.

Two citations will help to clarify the national aspect of the Old Testament prophecies relative to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah 32 we have a prediction of two things for Israel; one, the curse of the Lord would fall upon the land, because of national disobedience; and two, a great change would take place, and the wilderness would become a fruitful field, when the blessing of God should rest upon the land of Israel. Now, what takes place to cause the transformation? We quote, beginning at the middle of the chapter: "Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on High, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:13-18).

Again, there is that well-known passage in Joel 2. Following a graphic description of invasion from the north and Armageddon, and of the repentance of the nation dwelling in the land, the prophet says: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and

also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).

Now this promise of the Holy Spirit to rest upon Israel as a nation has never come to pass. He has fallen upon individuals. He now dwells within the Church, the body of Christ. But His gift to Israel as a nation has not been realized. Why? When God promised Israel of old that they should be His peculiar treasure, you will observe that the promise was conditional upon obedience: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:5, 6). Israel has been God's special care, and they will yet be His peculiar treasure, and a kingdom of priests to Him—when as a nation they repent and accept Messiah, whom once they rejected, and return to God in obedience. In that day the Holy Spirit will be poured upon them as promised.

D. The Spirit's Work in the Incarnation

There is still one more activity of the Holy Spirit, prior to His advent at Pentecost at the beginning of this present age, to be considered—His part in the Incarnation of the Son of God. In speaking of the Incarnation, we are not referring alone to the miraculous birth of the Saviour, but to the complete earthly sojourn of the Son of God, the Man Christ

Jesus. Nor do we lose sight of the fact that it was through the death of the Second Person of the Godhead that our redemption was wrought, by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19). But we shall see that the Third Person of the Trinity had also His work in the Incarnation.

The human body in which our Lord Jesus Christ entered into this world as a Babe and which He donned as a Man was a prepared body (Heb. 10:5). It was a body conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, who came upon Mary in order that through her might be born into this world the Son of God (Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 1:35). Speaking of the ministry of the Saviour, John the Baptist prophesied, in the Spirit, that He, the Lord Jesus, should baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11), referring in the first instance to the gift of the Spirit which should later come upon believers in Christ, the baptism of the Spirit. (The baptism of fire is yet future, and speaks of judgment.) Again, at the very outset of the ministry of the Son, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove, visible to the eye, to witness to His Person, and to anoint Him for the work that He, the Son, came to do (John 1:32). It was of the Spirit that our Lord was led into the desert place to be tempted of Satan (Luke 4:1); it was in the power of the Spirit that His Galilean ministry began (Luke 4:14). By the Spirit's power He wrought miracles, cast out demons, etc. (Matt. 12:28). Christ's message of the new birth declared the Spirit's work in regeneration (John 3:5, 6; 7:37-39). His great promises concerning the Comforter pertained to the Spirit's present work in believers, a different prophecy from that of the Old Testament (John 14:16, 17; 16:7-15). It was by the Spirit of God that our Lord was raised from among the dead: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit"

(1 Peter 3:18). Again, after His resurrection, our Lord once more promised that the Holy Spirit should come (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; *cf.* John 20:22). And now the incarnate Man in the Glory ministers to His own and indwells them by the power of the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:19). Throughout His whole earthly life the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit were interlinked, as they are today, when the Holy Spirit continues to glorify the Son (John 16:14).

Thus we see that the Spirit's work did not begin at Pentecost; it began in eternity past and will ever continue. He is the Power of God in the execution of His purposes. He it is, as we shall learn, who reproduces the mind and life of the Son of God in us so that we can walk even as He walked. He is the separating power in the life of the believer in Christ. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). So, then, let us walk in the Spirit, that we shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh.

3. The Work of the Spirit Since Pentecost

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost with heavenly signs, that is, the sound of a rushing, mighty wind and the appearance of the cloven tongues like as of fire, it was for the filling of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, not of some, but of all (Acts 2:1-4). And it is primarily with the Spirit's ministry of indwelling the body of believers that this portion of our study has to do. For there can be no gainsaying the fact that in this present age this peculiar ministry of His, unknown prior to Pentecost, and unsuspected, is the chief work of the Third Person of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit.

We must not forget, however, that the Spirit has another very important responsibility in this age, a ministry not confined to the Church Age, but prominent in it. It is His work by which every one of us whose trust is in Christ has been

brought to the place of conviction of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. It is the Spirit who is God's convicting agent, as declared by our Lord in unmistakable terms (John 16:7-11). In the world, then, the Spirit works in convicting power. He has also another task; it is to restrain the forces of evil until He shall be taken away, when lawlessness shall reach its zenith under the inspiration and machinations of the prince of this world, the devil (2 Thess. 2:6, 7; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

Before we examine the Spirit's ministry to the Church of Christ, that is, to all who have been born again and have been made partakers of the divine nature through faith in Christ, whatever their race or color or system or church polity, a few words are in order in respect to certain phenomena which accompanied the gift of the Holy Spirit on several occasions in apostolic times. For misapprehension and over-emphasis of these experiences have sometimes led to extreme pronouncements and excessive emotional demonstrations which are not in keeping with the understanding of God's Word revealed by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Thrice in the book of The Acts supernatural phenomena are recorded as accompanying the gift of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, in addition to the audible and visible signs already alluded to, the filling of the Spirit is declared to have given utterance to speech in tongues (Acts 2:4). Later, when Simon Peter, in response to the Lord's command by way of a vision, proclaimed the Gospel in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea, it is told that the Holy Spirit fell on them, and that they began to speak in tongues (Acts 10:46). While still a third time, on this occasion in the city of Ephesus, this phenomenon occurred, when Paul announced salvation through faith in Christ; for we read that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they spake with tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:6). These are the only

examples in the Bible of supernatural outward demonstrations of such a kind accompanying the gift of the Holy Spirit, and yet some have taught and do teach that the baptism of the Spirit must be attended with such signs.

It should be clear that the three instances referred to were given as signs that the same Spirit in like measure is bestowed upon all who believe in Christ and His Gospel, unto salvation. At Pentecost those who received the gift of the Holy Spirit were all who were present, and all were Jews or proselytes to Judaism. In Caesarea those who heard the Word through Peter's lips were Gentiles, and the demonstration was a sign from God that they, as well as the Jews, were the recipients of His grace and of the gift of the Spirit through faith, and without distinction. At Ephesus, some who had been baptized by John, whose disciples they were, were shown that there was a difference between John's baptism unto repentance, and faith in Christ Jesus; for upon their acknowledgment of Christ that occurred which they had not experienced before, the baptism of the Spirit, which was here verified by the same gift of tongues which had accompanied the initial outpouring of the Spirit upon Hebrew and Gentile Christians.

In only one other book of the Bible is the gift of tongues mentioned, that is, in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14. There it is definitely listed as a gift to the Church, with other gifts. It is to be observed that it is the last, and thus the least important, being inferior to the gift of prophesying (12:4-11; cf. 14:1-12). It is also said to be a gift which shall cease (13:8), as we believe the gifts to the Church of apostles and prophets (Eph. 4:11) ceased with the apostolic age. At any rate, the gift of tongues is not a mark of spirituality, for Corinth was the most carnal of the early Churches. Tongues are not to be used unless they can be understood, unless an interpreter is present (14:13-20), while except

every thing be done in order, they are forbidden; nor are women granted to speak in tongues in the churches (14:23, 34, 40). It will readily be seen that modern tongues movements are in excess, to say the least, and that they are definitely carried on in a way contrary to the clear teaching of the Scriptures. We will not say that some few earnest Christians have not been believers in the gift of tongues for today, nor that some may have not had rich experiences. But we do declare that the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit depend in no way upon the sign of the gift of tongues, and that so to teach is contrary to God's Word.

Sufficient space has been occupied with this oft-perverted doctrine of tongues. No consideration of the Spirit's present work would be complete without allusion to it. But that allusion having been made, suppose we examine now the multiple ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Church of Christ.

A. The Work of the Spirit in Regeneration

In Titus 3:5 we read: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His [God's] mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Thus the Agent of our regeneration, of the new birth, is the Holy Spirit. It is quite true that the other Persons of the Godhead are also accredited with acting in our salvation. For example, in John 1:13 it is said that those who believe on the Name of Christ are born "of God." In James 1:18 we are told that it is of the Father's will that we have been begotten by the Word of truth, while in John 5:21 the Son is said to quicken whom He will. This does not deny the Spirit's agency in regeneration, however, but simply brings to bear further evidence of the co-equality of the Three Persons of the Godhead. Certainly, as is so distinctly shown in the Titus passage, the work of regeneration is a ministry of the Holy Spirit. He who, by the Word,

convicts us of sin in the first place, causes us to be regenerated through faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins.

What is this regeneration? It is the new birth (John 3: 3-7); it is transformation by which we become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17); it is the impartation of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); it is the gift of eternal life.

B. The Work of the Spirit in Baptism

The baptism to which we refer is, of course, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and not water baptism. Water baptism, the initiatory rite of the Christian profession, is the outward signification on the part of the believer in Christ that something has taken place within. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act of God within the believer whereby he is made a member of the Body of Christ. It occurs simultaneously with regeneration, and never at any subsequent time. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is confused upon occasion with the filling of the Holy Spirit. The latter is to be sought for by yieldedness to Him, but the baptism of the Spirit, like His indwelling, is an initial act on His part which cannot be diminished or added to. It is a permanent experience (which is not experimental, however) shared by every Christian in like degree.

The baptism of the Spirit is a distinguishing act on God's part for this age. The Old Testament saints, made righteous in God's sight through faith, are not said to be members of Christ's Body. Reserved for the Church in this Age of Grace is that position, which, wrought for us through Christ's death and resurrection, is effected by the baptism of the Spirit when we believe.

In considering this aspect of the present work of the Third Person of the Godhead we shall examine only those Scriptures upon which all students of the Word of God are agreed

as relating to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels there are four, and all of them are prophetic utterances of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; and John 1:33). In The Acts there are two (1:5 and 11:16). The first contains our Lord's post-resurrection prediction to the apostles: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence," while the second has to do with Peter's recollection, in the house of Cornelius, of this word of the Lord. The baptism of the Spirit is mentioned by name in only one other passage, which is the key text on this work of His, namely, 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

From these Scriptures we learn: (1) that the baptism of the Spirit took place at Pentecost; (2) that it is simultaneous with regeneration; (3) that it is shared by all; (4) that it is not dependent upon spirituality, but is universal to believers; and (5) that it is union with Christ. We who are Christians have been made, by the baptism of the Spirit, members of the Body of Christ, who is Himself the Head (Col. 1:18; *cf.* Eph. 4:15, 16). The Body of Christ, His Church, was formed and is being formed continually by this baptism of the Spirit. The Scriptures teach nothing of further or different baptisms of the Holy Spirit, or of any experiences after salvation on the part of individuals here and there attesting a post-regeneration baptism of the Spirit, or of any right for us to seek the baptism of the Spirit. That baptism has occurred and is ours the instant we are born again.

As members of the Body of Christ there are given to us varied gifts by the Spirit of God. We are not obscured in the entirety, but each has his identity, and to each is given his gift. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word

of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit . . . all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:8-11).

C. The Work of the Spirit in Sanctification

When the word *sanctification* is employed there come to mind three aspects of it: positional sanctification, practical sanctification, and perfected sanctification. The first expression has to do with what we have been made in Christ and are in God's sight; the second pertains to our spiritual growth in this earthly life; the third is what we shall be when we shall be like Christ, when we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2, 3).

While the second classification, practical sanctification or holiness, comes by the indwelling and filling of the Spirit, His work of sanctification is not thus mentioned by name in this respect. For only once do we read of the "sanctification of the Spirit." That is in 1 Peter 1:2, where the Apostle addresses the sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, etc., as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The doctrine is clarified when we consider that *to sanctify* means *to render or declare sacred*, or *to set apart*. A *saint* (from the same root word) is not, of necessity, one who lives a holy life (though he should be), but one who has been declared holy by God, one who is separated by God unto Himself. This is positional sanctification. Thus, at the moment of his regeneration the believer in Christ is set apart by the Holy Spirit, to be obedient to the Lord as He Himself was obedient, and to be cleansed from all sin, through the blood of the Cross of Christ.

Experimental or practical sanctification through the Spirit's power will be discussed briefly in a later paragraph, which will have to do with the filling of the Spirit.

D. The Work of the Spirit in Indwelling

There are not a few Scriptures which tell of the indwelling of the Spirit, that is, that within the child of God there dwells the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. We shall cite but one passage: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; also John 7:37-39; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).

The indwelling of the Spirit began at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), and it is coincident with regeneration in the case of every individual who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and his Saviour from sin. The indwelling of the Spirit is not to be confused with His filling; the latter is an experience to be sought continuously, while the former is a fact dependent upon no feeling, nor upon obedience. It is the promise of the Father to all who believe.

The indwelling of the Spirit is the proof of salvation, as His absence is evidence of an unsaved condition: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). It was not said to the Corinthians that if they were obedient, or spiritual, or mature Christians they were temples of the Holy Spirit, but all of them are declared to have been His dwelling place. Further, the Spirit is never said to leave the child of God, but quite to the contrary it is written that "in whom [Christ] having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13, free translation), which sealing is later declared to be

“unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). Once born anew, the Spirit is in our hearts to stay. We cannot lose Him. We can disobey Him, we can quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19), we can grieve Him (Eph. 4:30); but by God’s matchless grace through Him, the Holy Spirit, we are sealed until redemption day.

From the fact of the Spirit’s presence within our hearts many things evolve. It is impossible to consider all these, or a few of them in great detail, in a work of this nature. We mention, however, certain of the more evident ministries of the Spirit to us as a result of His indwelling and abiding presence.

(1) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is our Guide into all truth* (John 16:12-15). He takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us. He is the Interpreter of prophetic truths, showing us things to come. By His instruction we understand the Word of God.

(2) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is our Intercessor and Teacher in prayer* (Rom. 8:26, 27; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20). When in human weakness we do not know how to pray or what to pray for, the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us, according to the will of God.

(3) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and our Empowerment for life and for witness* (1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thess. 1:5). It is He who strengthens us to live holily, and He it is who takes our message and witness and burns them into the hearts of those who hear and read. He is the Comforter, who helps and encourages us along life’s pathway.

(4) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Bestower of gifts* (1 Cor. 12:4-11; cf. Eph. 4:3, 11). To every member of the Body of Christ some gift is given, by the Spirit, and to the Church as a whole are these gifts made. That talent which is yours or mine is the Spirit’s bestowal to us, that we should bear witness to Christ in a sin-darkened world.

(5) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Assurance of our salvation and eternal security as Christians, and the Earnest of our inheritance* (Eph. 4:30; 1:13, 14). Because He seals us—not *until* we sin, not *until* we grieve Him, not *until* we obey, but unto the day of redemption—we can know that our salvation is sure and cannot be lost. And because He is the Earnest of our inheritance, we know that better things are to come. The gift of the Spirit and His sealing are the promise of this glorious truth and hope.

(6) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Restrainer of evil in this present age* (2 Thess. 2:7). It is when He is taken away at the translation of the saints of God that the Antichrist will be revealed, and lawlessness, now restrained to a degree by the Spirit's presence in us, will reach its depths of defiance against God and righteousness.

(7) *The indwelling Holy Spirit is He by whom our mortal bodies will be quickened when the Lord comes for His own* (Rom. 8:11). By His power our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from among the dead. Christ is "the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). The fact that the Spirit raised the Lord Jesus is the earnest of our own resurrection.

E. The Work of the Spirit in Filling

While the works of the Spirit within the believer mentioned to this time, that is, in regeneration, baptism, positional sanctification, and indwelling, are conditioned only upon faith in Christ, the filling of the Spirit is not experienced by all, but is dependent upon obedience to the Word of God and the Spirit's leading through the Word. Here, indeed, is experimental truth, and the effectiveness of our walk and witness is conditioned upon our subjection to the Spirit, of our being filled with the Spirit.

We are not commanded to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, for that we already are as Christians. But we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; cf. Acts 4:8, 31). The Christian can be filled over and over again. It should be a daily experience. This filling is not received simply by talking about it, by saying, "I want to be filled with the Spirit." No!—there must be obedience. If through God's Word the Spirit of God leads us into the obedient pathway, and we refuse to heed, we cannot be filled; for we thus quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19). If we disobey the revealed will of God by word or deed, we cannot be filled; for thus we grieve Him (Eph. 4:30). He still dwells within our hearts under such conditions, but He cannot fill us while any doors are shut to Him, when any sin is held to, or known sin remains unconfessed. Yet He continues to plead with us, to show us our hearts and their need, and when we confess our sins and are cleansed, so that nothing hinders the Spirit's control, then there is power and peace and joy undreamed of, through His filling. Bear in mind, however, that nowhere are we told that the filling of the Spirit is to be accompanied by ecstatic or uncontrolled demonstrations. He who is truly Spirit-filled will act in accord with the Word of God which says: "Let all things be done unto edifying. . . . For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. . . . Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:26, 33, 40).

To be obedient to God's Word, to be yielded to the Spirit, is to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18). It is as we walk in the Spirit that His fruit is manifest in us, that is, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23). In the believer the flesh and the Spirit are constantly warring against each other. As we walk in the flesh, we quench and grieve the Spirit; as we walk in the Spirit we do not fulfil the desires of the flesh.

So, living in the Spirit, let us also walk in Him by being filled.

Practical sanctification, alluded to in a previous paragraph, is the result of walking in the Spirit, obedient to God's Word and His application of it to our own hearts and lives. We have been chosen in Christ since before the foundation of the world, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him" (Eph. 1:4). The way to such holiness in the daily experience is to be filled with the Spirit of God, in whose power and care God's sanctified saints are sanctified in their walk.

4. The Future Work of the Holy Spirit

Finally, although our primary effort has been to show the present work of the Holy Spirit, we would mention very briefly His future work, after this present age.

We have already stated that He will be the Agent of the resurrection of our mortal bodies, and that He will be taken from earth as the Indweller with the translation of the saints who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord for His own. Certainly He will continue His convicting power upon the hearts of men during the Tribulation, for out of that period of suffering on earth will come the Tribulation saints, many of whom will be martyred for Christ's sake (Rev. 20:4), while as the Tribulation ends and the Millennium is about to begin there will take place that which was prophesied by Joel for Judah and Jerusalem: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall

be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:28-32). It was this prophecy which the Apostle Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost, but it was not fulfilled in completeness then, but only as an evidence as to the Person of Christ, Israel's Messiah. Assuredly those upon whom the Spirit shall fall, and who will remain on earth in millennial days will not lose that gift of the Spirit promised of old and fulfilled for their own salvation and witness to Messiah. There will be salvation during the thousand years, clearly by regenerative process, as indicated by Ezekiel 36:25-27. The Holy Spirit will indwell such believers even in that future day (vs. 27).

So then, we have seen that the Holy Spirit had a work to do in ages past, He has His work in this present age, and there is yet a future work for Him to do. Like the Father and like the Son, the Spirit is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

How wonderful it must have been to have lived on earth when our Lord was here, and to have known Him as did Peter and John and Martha and Mary! How necessary that He should have left Heaven's glory and emptied Himself and become obedient unto the death of the Cross! Had He not done so, for us there would be no salvation, no peace, no hope. Yet we can understand, as we learn the widespread and diversified ministry of the Holy Spirit, how true were the words of Christ when He said: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7). Let us

be filled with the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, so as not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but rather to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XI

SATAN AND THE ANGELIC BEINGS

All that we know about angelic beings and their work is by direct revelation from God and is told in His Word, the Bible. It is for this reason that rationalism and skepticism reject the fact of the existence of angels, while the wisdom of men, as exemplified by the Gnosticism of Colosse, when it does admit that there are angelic beings, speculates by intruding into those things which it has not seen, vainly puffed up by its fleshly mind. It is disconcerting and irksome to the intellectual world to be dependent upon the revelation of God, or to be expected to believe in that which it cannot see, or handle, or taste, or smell.

But God has spoken. His Word declares angelic existence and depicts to some extent their nature and work. And it is to this source of knowledge that we turn for examination of the doctrine of angels, which we shall consider under four divisions.

1. The Fact of the Existence of Angels

The words *angel* and *angels* appear nearly three hundred times in the Bible. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word is *mal'ak*, and in the New, the Greek is *aggelos*. Literally both words, rendered *angel*, mean *messenger*.

An angel, then, is a messenger, and while generally the word is used in connection with supernatural beings of the spiritual realm who are agents of God, the term is occasionally employed in other senses. For example, there are those other supernatural beings, sometimes referred to as *devils* or *demons*, who must be classed among the fallen angels, whom Jude calls "the angels which kept not their first estate"

(Jude 6). Then, there is "*the* angel of the Lord,"* in contrast to "*an* angel of the Lord." Occasionally men also are alluded to as angels, notably in the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2 and 3). Sometimes, too, the angels are called "the sons of God" (Job 38:7; cf. Gen. 6:4).

While the angelic beings are spoken of collectively quite frequently, most often we read of individual angels operating in God's behalf. There are rare occasions when these supernatural messengers are named by name. Two of these, Michael, the archangel, and Gabriel, are seen to be the emissaries of God for His specific purposes, while the third, Lucifer, who is called only once by that name (Isa. 14:12), is none other than Satan, the arch-enemy of Jehovah and His righteousness.

The fact of the existence of angelic beings is sufficiently vouched for in that more than half of the books of the Bible, seventeen in the Old Testament and a like number in the New, attest their existence by referring to them naturally and without apology. We accept, therefore, the inspired writings as proof of angelic reality.

2. The Nature and Work of the Angelic Beings

The angels are created beings (Col. 1:16) whose sphere is in the heavens (Mark 13:32; Gal. 1:8) as a rule. In relation to creation as a whole the angels were made a little higher than man (Psa. 8:5; cf. Heb. 2:7). We are not told specifically that the angels have bodies, but the Scriptures do speak of "spiritual bodies" (1 Cor. 15:44), and we assume that it is these which the angels possess. But these spiritual bodies, if the angels are clothed with them, are invisible to

*Generally the expression "*the* angel of the Lord," refers to the Lord, Jehovah Himself, as He appeared to men as the divine Messenger. Such appearances are called *Theophanies*. The contexts will show these instances. We submit several references for illustration: Gen. 16:7; 22:11; Num. 22:21ff; etc.

the human eye. On the other hand, the angels are sometimes shown as inhabiting material bodies, human in form, so that they have appeared as men (Acts 1:10; Heb. 13:2; etc.). Whether they were given special bodies for these occasions, or whether it is the capacity of such spiritual bodies to assume human form, or to disappear and appear at will, as the risen Christ did in His resurrection body, we do not know.

The angels are always referred to in the masculine gender, and never as women. It is clear that there is no increase in their number by generative process (Mark 12:25), nor any decrease by death. From the beginning we infer that they have been innumerable in number (Heb. 12:22; cf. Dan. 7:10, etc.).

A. The Work of the Holy Angels

The work of the holy angels of God—that is, the unfallen angels—is manifold. They have been messengers of God to mankind on many occasions, as is shown in both the Old and New Testaments (Gen. 19:1; Num. 20:16; Dan. 9:21; Matt. 1:20; Acts 5:19, etc.). They were witnesses to the epochal events of creation and redemption—at the creation of the world (Job 38:4-10); at the birth of the Lord Jesus (Luke 2:8-14); at Christ's temptation (Matt. 4:1-11); at His transfiguration, in His trial, at His resurrection, and at His ascension (Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 22:39-46; John 20:12; and Acts 1:10, 11). And when our Lord comes again in power and great glory, He will be accompanied by all His holy angels, who will do His bidding (Matt. 25:31).

The angels are ministering spirits, servants of God, "to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," both in Old Testament times and to believers in the present age (Psa. 34:7; Heb. 1:13, 14; cf. also Matt. 18:10).

We venture to suggest, however, that the greatest service to God that the holy angels perform is that of rendering

worship, praise, and adoration to Him. From Genesis to Revelation, yes, from eternity to eternity, this has been, is, and will be so. The Psalmist writes of them: "Praise ye the Lord. . . . Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light" (Psa. 148:1-3). Isaiah declares of the Seraphim, whom he saw in a vision above the temple of the Lord: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:1-3). While John, in the Apocalypse, writes of the four living creatures who surrounded the throne in Heaven, that they rested not night or day, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:6-8).

B. The Work of the Fallen Angels

Of the fallen angels there seem to be two distinct groups:

(1) There are the fallen angels that are at liberty and are active, the evil principalities and powers of Ephesians 6:12, against whom the Christian must stand fast in the strength and armor of the Lord. These undoubtedly fell when their chief, Satan, fell, because iniquity was found in him (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:15). They are the *demons*. (The word *devil*, from the Greek *diabolos*, refers to Satan. There is only one *devil*. But there are many *demons*, from the Greek, *daimones* or *daimonia*.) These demons are the "angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6), and we encounter them frequently in the Gospel records (Mark 1:12, etc.). They are alluded to in the Epistles, also, as seducing spirits (1 Tim. 4:1). They will be judged when Satan's sentence is executed (1 Cor. 5:3; cf. Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

(2) There are the fallen angels who are already bound, for what additional offense against God's holiness we are not told. But of them it is said that they are delivered into

“chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4; *cf.* Jude 6).

These latter have been, while the former still are, Satan’s agencies of evil in this world, the principalities and powers controlled by the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). And free as the unbound fallen angels are, yet it is to be observed that even now there must be some judgment acting upon some of them, who have not, apparently, spiritual bodies of their own, but must seek to enter men or beasts (Mark 5:1–14). This is known as demon possession.

3. Government, Authority, and Power Among the Angelic Beings

It is not our place to speculate upon what has not been revealed. But we wonder if we do not have some revelation that we do not fully understand as yet as to the government, authority, and power in the unseen realm, that is, among the angels.

We read in the Bible, for example, of our Lord’s creation of “thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers” (Col. 1:16), and we infer that there are these both among the visible and invisible things. If this be so, then among the angels there are rulers—there is government, authority, and power. And this is confirmed by Satan having himself been at one time “the anointed cherub that covereth” (Ezek. 28:14), while Michael is called “the archangel” (Jude 9).

A. Distinctive Classifications Among the Holy Angels

(1) There are those who are called “the elect angels” (1 Tim. 5:21). In what way these angels are *chosen* it is not made clear, but from the context we would assume that all the unfallen angels are “elect angels.”

(2) There are the *Cherubim*. These angelic beings are alluded to two score or more times in the Bible, and Satan,

the anointed cherub, must have been of their number. They are introduced as the guardians of the gate of Eden (Gen. 3:24), and their figures are seen in gold upon the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:19). They appear to have been the appointed guardians of the holiness of God, as it were, to keep sin from His presence.

(3) There are the *Seraphim*, mentioned by that title only once, in Isaiah 6, in which they worship God with their "Holy, holy, holy," already referred to. Their particular ministry seems to have been that of continuous worship of Jehovah.

(4) Another group of angelic beings, called "living creatures" ("beasts" in the Authorized Version), appears in Revelation. There are four of them, and in view of the fact that their ministry is that of worship, and they are characterized by six wings, as are the *Seraphim*, and utter the three-fold "Holy holy, holy" that the *Seraphim* speak (Rev. 4:8; cf. also 5:9, 10), it may be that the "living creatures" and the *Seraphim* are identical.

*B. The Angels Who Are Called by Name**

(1) There is the angel Gabriel, who appears in the records of Daniel and Luke (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26), and whose name means, "the mighty one." Clearly this angelic being is the unfailing courier of Jehovah for important and essential messages. Twice in Daniel's Prophecy we see Gabriel coming to the ancient seer and interpreting for him his visions, and by these angelic interpretations the divine program was made known concerning certain Gentile and Jewish activities in the centuries and millenniums to come (Dan. 8 and 9).

*Dr. Arno C. Gaebelin's book, *Gabriel and Michael, the Archangel*, should surely be read for new light on the ministry of these angelic beings.

Again, in the New Testament we see Gabriel as the messenger of God, bearing news of the most important event ever to come to the inhabitants of this earth. For it was Gabriel who, after having delivered to the hoary priest, Zacharias, the word that Zacharias and Elisabeth were to have a son, appeared to the virgin of Nazareth, Mary, and told her that it was she whom God had chosen to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:19, 26ff).

(2) There is Michael, the archangel—the only archangel, by the way. He is named by name in three books of the Bible: Daniel, Jude, and Revelation. In Daniel 10:13 he is called, “Michael, one of the chief princes”; in the 21st verse of the same chapter, “Michael your prince.” It is in Jude 6 that he is given the title, “Michael the archangel.” In Revelation 12:7 he is seen leading the angelic host in expelling Satan from Heaven. In one other place he is referred to, however, though not by name, when in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we find his voice joined with that of the Lord Jesus Christ in Christ’s return to gather His own to Himself.

Michael is not so much a messenger. His name means, “who is like god.” He seems to be the commander-in-chief of the warring holy angels in their conflicts with the fallen angels. It was Michael who assisted Gabriel in the latter’s encounter with “the prince of Persia” (Dan. 10:20, 21). He appears again, to stand for Daniel’s people in “a time of trouble, such as never was” (Dan. 12:1), that is, in the Great Tribulation. As we have already stated, Michael is the leader of the heavenly hosts against Satan and his angels, in a future war in Heaven (Rev. 12:7–9). Yet powerful as this mighty archangel is, we read of another with whom he dared not contend about the body of Moses, Satan himself, to whom Michael said: “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

Michael seems also to be Israel’s guardian angel, as it were. It is said of him that he is “Michael your [Daniel’s] prince,”

and "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy [Daniel's] people" (Dan. 10:21; 12:1). We wonder if his part in the translation of the saints is not a shout of gathering for all Israel that will have died in faith by that day together with the then living Jewish believers in Christ as Messiah and Son of God!

(3) There are other angels who are called by name, it appears; but these are the fallen angels. The context shows clearly that "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" is an angelic being opposed to God and His messenger (Dan. 10:13). It seems, too, that "the prince of Grecia," with whom Gabriel said he must contend upon his departure from Daniel, is an angel (Dan. 10:20).

Other than these two angelic princes, there is but one angelic being called by name, "Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isa. 14:12). So great is his power, so sinister his purpose, so awful his doom, that we shall devote the balance of our space on angelology to him.

4. Satan: His Person, History, and Judgment

"Lucifer, son of the morning," is known in Scripture by other names, as Satan, the devil, the dragon, the serpent, the anointed cherub, the evil one, the prince of the power of the air, and the prince of this world, etc. (Rev. 12:9, 10; Ezek. 28:14; John 17:15; Eph. 2:2; John 12:31). We shall refer to him henceforth as Satan.

There is a popular misconception as to the person, appearance, and dwelling place of Satan, due in part to secular writings and in part to worldly cartoons. On the one hand, the personality of Satan is denied or not understood, and if he is thought of at all it is as the spirit of evil in the world. On the other hand, he is pictured as a grotesque, manlike creature, bright red in color, with horns and a spiked tail, who wears a sardonic grin and carries a pitchfork, and whose

home is in hell. That is exactly the picture he would have men have of him, for it is deceptive, indeed. He is in reality, perhaps, the most beautiful creature of God. Certainly he is not in hell, and has probably never been there. So let us see what the Bible says of his person.

Satan is a created being, the highest creature of God's creative genius, who was, it appears, God's right hand of power in the control of the universe and the angels, and full of wisdom. This we ascertain from Holy Writ.

In Ezekiel 28 there is a lamentation addressed to the king of Tyrus. Now, while there may be certain application to this king, it is evident that such an earthly king never fulfilled all that is written here, and it is generally applied to Satan, and rightly so. Here we are told (vss. 12-19) that Satan was "the anointed cherub that covereth" who sealed up the sun, who was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, and who was set over the holy mountain of God, that is, he ruled for God. His dwelling place was in a certain Eden, the garden of God—not the Eden of Genesis 2 and 3, but a mineral Eden, in existence, probably, before the creation of the earth, or its recreation (Gen. 1:2b). Thus Satan lived and governed and "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." He was perfect in all his ways—*until* iniquity was found in him.

How did this come to pass? We read of Satan's ambition and fall in Isaiah 14:12-17. It is in this passage that we learn his original name, "Lucifer, son of the morning." A time came when the anointed cherub asserted his will against that of Almighty God. He rebelled against God, and sought to exalt his throne above the stars of God, and to be like God. Five times we read here of Satan's self-will: "Thou hast said in thine heart, *I will* ascend into Heaven, *I will* exalt my throne above the stars of God: *I will* sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: *I*

will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will* be like the Most High.” This was when iniquity was found in Satan. Here he fell in the first measure along the way to his eternal doom. Lifted up with pride, he was brought into sure judgment (vs. 12; *cf.* 1 Tim. 3:6).

But although separated from God, yet in God’s wisdom, past our finding out, Satan continued to have and still has the heavens as his sphere, and walks to and fro in the earth. Mysteriously, he also has access to God. There he is the accuser of the brethren, accusing them before God day and night (Rev. 12:10), an activity expressly stated in the case of Job (Job 1:6-12; *cf.* Luke 22:31). His power is only limited by God, and under His permissive will and until His time Satan is able to make the earth to tremble, to weaken nations, to shake kingdoms, and so on; and he has, too, the power of causing sickness, and even had the power of death, until he was conquered at Calvary (passages cited; *cf.* also Job 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18).

While we find nowhere that Satan is omniscient or omnipresent, through his agents, the fallen angels, he appears to be in communication with all the world and the heavens.

He is the tempter, who tried our Lord in his desire to secure His worship of himself, and who tempts men and women today. It was through Satan that sin came into the universe, and it was by his temptation of Eve that sin came into the world. But Satan is not responsible for every sin that we commit, except as he was the original tempter. For since our first parents fell, we have inherited their sinful natures, and even without his blandishments we sin against God’s holiness.

The purposes of Satan in the world today are unchanged from his original ambition—to be like the Most High, and to draw worship to himself. That is why he counterfeits the truth with false religions. As a liar, and the father of lies

(John 8:44), he seeks to deceive men by untruth, for there is no truth in him. It is as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) that Satan, in whom is no light but only darkness, deludes men by seducing spirits into false doctrines and worldly religions whereby they think to lift themselves into life and eternal bliss. His power is immeasurable, and it is against such a power that the warfare of the Christian is made—not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12).

Satan surely knows that his doom is sealed, for it is written in the Scriptures. Every wile that he could muster, and he is a wily foe, he employed to defeat God's purposes, and the plan of our redemption. But he is a defeated foe. Until the judgment is finally wrought against him, however, like the slippery serpent that he is, he writhes in his death throes, to destroy the divine program, or to delay it. But his efforts are doomed to failure.

So it is that his greatest activities are yet to be seen. For in the final stages of this age they will be manifest, as is clearly shown in the New Testament, especially Revelation 12, 13, and 17. There we see him and his great earthly actors of the Tribulation. He persecutes Israel as she has never been persecuted, through his agents, the Beasts of Revelation 13. The first Beast will be the political head of apostate Christendom, the Revived Roman Empire. The second Beast will be the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2), the False Prophet, the Anti-Christ—the religious head of the apostasy. This unholy trinity, Satan and the two Beasts, will blaspheme against God and endeavor to draw to themselves the worship that is due the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But their end is sure. The two men, the Beasts, will be cast into the lake of fire, to be joined at length by Satan, for whom it was prepared.

Space permits no further discussion of this sinister and wicked being, except a brief examination of his judgment, which may be divided into three phases.

(1) Satan's moral judgment crashed upon him when iniquity was found in him, before this world began. At that time, as we have already stated, he fell from his position as the anointed cherub and from the presence of God, although he is still allowed to inhabit the heavens and to have access to God (passages already cited).

(2) Satan's judgment was sealed, his defeat accomplished, when our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, died for sin on the Cross, and rose again on the third day. Said the Lord Jesus, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31, *cf.* 16:11). And in Colossians 2:15 it is written that through the Cross of Christ He, our Lord, spoiled "principalities and powers," making a show of them openly and triumphing over them in it. Even Satan, who sought Christ's worship, will one day bow the knee to Him who by His death triumphed over the devil. For it is written that to the Lord Jesus and at His Name "every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

(3) Satan's judgment will be executed in a series of events, to last more than a thousand years. These will begin when he is cast out of Heaven by Michael and his angels (Rev. 12:7-10). It will continue when, after Armageddon, and as the Millennium begins, he is bound and sealed in the abyss for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).^{*} It will be consum-

^{*}Why is it that God will not cast Satan immediately into the lake of fire, instead of binding him for a thousand years, and then "after a season" sending him there? Scripture does not say. But we suggest that it is to show us that man, who has failed in every test God has given, under Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise,

mated when, the thousand years having expired, Satan is still rebellious and seeks to overthrow the camp of the saints of the Most High. At that time God's hand will fall to seal Satan's final doom. He will be cast into the lake of fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet are—a place never prepared for man, but for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41)—to “be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Thus the awful doom descends relentlessly and surely upon “Lucifer, son of the morning.” The highest creature ever made has wrought for himself, because of self-will, the most awful fate in God's universe—and it will never end.

What can poor mortals do against such a foe as Satan? The unregenerate have no weapons with which to face him: he is so strong and they are so weak. But the Christian is not limited thus, “because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). To us it is written: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). But how can we, so weak, resist him who is so mighty? By being strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:

Law, and Grace, will yet fail again apart from Satan's influence and power. For even when the devil is bound, and Christ reigns over the earth in righteousness, at the end of the Millennium Satan will be able to muster to his cause a rebellious people “the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:7-9). How wonderful that God loved men enough to give His Son to die in our place, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”!

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:11-18).

"Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

CHAPTER XII

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Fundamental in the fields of religion, philosophy, and science is a subject which is basic in Christianity also. It is the problem of the origin of things—of the universe and the world in which we live. For no one who has ever done any thinking along serious lines will have been able to escape the questions: “How did it all begin? What was there before the world came into being? And where did God, if there is a God, come from? How did He initiate?”

The mature Christian has no trouble in accepting in faith what God has chosen to reveal in His Word. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). But to young and immature Christians, and to some who are as yet unsaved but may have minds receptive to the truth, the philosophic theories and scientific arguments which seem to refute what the Bible teaches pose problems not easily dismissed.

Hypotheses based on reason and apart from God’s revelation should not trouble us, however. For as long as the world exists there will be new theories to outmode the old. But scientific facts must be faced. It is irrefutable that true science and the Word of God can have no conflict. For God is truth. He has spoken, and whatever He has chosen to make known in His Word is absolute and beyond counter-evidence or refutation. Where science appears to contradict the Bible, then one of two things must hold: either the Bible has been misinterpreted, or science is in error.

It is our conviction and contention that there is written in the Bible, at the very beginning where it should be written, the record of the origin of the universe, and that it is told in terms so simple as to be understandable to the most humble

and uneducated persons, and at the same time, in words so profound as to satisfy the thirst for truth and invite the interest and attention of the loftiest minds. And since the Scriptures are our authority for truth, it is what they teach about the origin of the universe that we want to know. No theories of men can supplant the authority of God Himself.

Our considerations of the subject under discussion will fall into three divisions.

1. Only God Is Eternal

That God alone is eternal is the clear teaching of the Bible. Opposed to this are certain hypotheses that submit that matter also existed eternally. Briefly, let us examine the most prevalent theories that pertain to the origin of the universe. (1) There are the pantheistic teachings, which may be summed up as follows: that the universe and God are one, that is, that the universe is the existence form of God, the garment in which He is clothed. (2) There is the hypothesis that excludes an extramundane mind from the causation of the world. This theory, generally known as Materialism, holds that the earliest condition that existed was simply matter which had properties which may now be seen or known everywhere, and the working of the forces of physics, mechanics, etc. caused the formation of the cosmic bodies, and the sustenance of vegetable and animal life on this earth. (3) Another theory, known generally as Deism, suggests that there was an eternal and infinite mind, but that there was eternal matter also, and that the two co-existent substances operated in combination, as it were. And (4) there is Theism, which teaches the eternal existence of an infinite mind only, a Personality known as God, and that by His will and command all things came into being. The first three theories are unscriptural and atheistic; the last is Biblical.

Pantheism is quite obviously an outmoded doctrine, which was never true. If God and the universe are identical, then it must hold that God is subject to the same contradictions and extremes that exist in the universe. He must, therefore, be material as well as immaterial, rational as well as irrational, movable and at the same time immovable, sinful while holy, and evil as well as good. This would mean that Satan and God are one. Such a belief, in addition to being ridiculous, is nothing less than blasphemy.

Both Materialism and Deism are likewise insupportable. Recent discoveries eliminate any reasonable claim that matter is eternal. For it has been proved, for example, that radium and uranium give off emanations, denoting a downward process in nature that must have had a beginning. That the same retrogression takes place in the heavenly bodies is recognized by astro-physicists. And the splitting of the atom demonstrates that matter does not exist eternally, for it can be destroyed. Science simply confirms the Bible in declaring that God alone is eternal.

A few Scriptures will establish that this is so. The opening words of the Bible tell us that an infinite, extramundane Personality existed: "In the beginning God . . ." Immediately the eternity of matter alone is refuted. Further, the first verse of Genesis says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," thus giving the lie to any hypothesis that assumes that matter existed co-eternally with God. "But," someone will say, "that is not entirely true. For while God is said to have created the heavens and the earth, it is not declared that He did not make use of matter already in existence." We believe that the fact can be established, however, in the Hebrew word that is translated *created*. It is *bara*, and while it would be dishonest to assert without qualification that it means *to create out of nothing*, since it denotes *to cut down* or *to divide*, it has also the connotation

of *to create* or *to fashion*. It is important to observe its use in the Bible, moreover. It is employed forty-five times, and we have traced it throughout. Not once is *bara* in its various forms used to denote any act of man, but always, without exception, it has to do with a creative act of God.

It may be argued that in spite of this fact it is not yet established that what God created He made *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. Consequently, the Holy Spirit has made it plain elsewhere in the inspired Scriptures that God existed before all things. Not only did He create the heavens and the earth, the waters that are above the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and every living thing, vegetable and animal, but He created them out of nothing; for He created **all** things, visible and invisible. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). "For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16, 17). Not only is there no mention made anywhere in the Bible of any pre-existent substance prior to the creation of the universe and the world in which we live, but God alone is said to be eternal, and it is declared that "all things" were made by Him.*

It must be concluded, therefore, from the revelation of the Scriptures: (1) that only God is eternal; (2) that matter or substance did not exist before the creation of the universe; (3) that what God created was created out of nothing; and (4) that creation was not the result of any forces or laws of

*It is not our purpose to discuss here the Agency of God in the creation, but merely that God is the Creator.

science or physics, since nothing existed prior to the creation, but that God formed the worlds by His power and for His pleasure by divine sovereignty.

The great mystery of God's Being and how He existed prior to the origin of the universe must remain a mystery. It is incomprehensible to the finite mind, insoluble either to experience or reason. Human theory can be nothing but conjecture. God is eternal. God is God. We must leave it there.

2. The Bible Must Be the Source Book and Final Authority Concerning the Origin of the Universe

Many books have been written about the origin of things and the creation of the world. Many theories go back for centuries, and some accounts of creation date to the earliest periods of writing. Geologists have discovered significant data as to the beginnings of the earth, and archeologists have unearthed evidences that go back a long, long time. But all the theories that are not based on God's revelation in His Word, and all the deductions arrived at from finds on or in the earth, are not truth unless they harmonize with the Bible; never, if they deny it.

Why do we say this? Are there not other accounts of the creation, as, for example, those of the ancient Roman and Greek poets, Ovid (First Century, B.C.) and Hesiod (Eighth Century, B.C.)? Did not the philosopher, Plato, in the early part of the Fifth Century, B.C., produce his great discussion on cosmogony, *Timaeus*? And can we not go back even further, to the Babylonian *Epic of Creation*, six tablets written sometime during the first Babylonian dynasty, between 2169 and 1870 B.C.? But where did the Romans and the Greeks and the Babylonians obtain their information about the creation? They do not claim them to be revelations from God—yet only He was there when it all happened!

But the Bible account, the record of Genesis, differs from all others in that God is its source. Moses could not have known from experience what took place when the universe was formed. Nor could he have learned it from his forbears who, too, were creatures. Even Adam could not have known, unless God told him. Moses's mind and hand were inspired by the Spirit of God. As the veil was lifted from the Prophet Daniel's eyes that he might see into the future, and as the Apostle John was transported in thought into Heaven itself and the coming eternity, so the historian Moses was enabled, by the Spirit's endowment, to gaze backward and record primordial facts. As a holy man of God he spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit (*cf.* 2 Pet. 1:21).

Consider, if you will, the place that the Genesis account of creation holds in the scientific world. We make but passing reference to a fact that most critics of the Bible take pains to ignore: that very many scientific men of highest repute have accepted and do accept the Genesis record *per se*, among whom we need mention only the names of Sir Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, and Lord William Thompson Kelvin, to designate their stature. These men have been named because they are known by almost everyone. But we need not turn back centuries or generations to find intellectuals of highest distinction who have held the Genesis record of creation as the truth. For example, more recently a leader in the field of philosophy, Professor Robert Flint, author of a great work, *Theism*, and compiler of the article on "The History of Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Modern History*, expressed himself as a proponent of this view; while among the living physicists, Dr. Arthur H. Compton, Dean of the Division of Physical Sciences in the University of Chicago, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1923, testifies to his faith that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

But what of the others, who propose certain hypotheses of their own, theories which issue out of study, and reason, and geological or archeological discovery? Some come out forthrightly to oppose and disparage the Bible, while others ignore its revelation entirely. But most significantly, those who do not set aside entirely all of these ancient writings, almost without exception disregard the cosmogony of Hesiod and Plato and others, including the mythological Babylonian *Epic*, and center their attacks upon the Bible, endeavoring to refute this one Book. It is an unconscious compliment to the historicity of Genesis that those who hold contrary views recognize that it, and not all the other works of ancient literature combined, is deemed, not only worthy of refutation, but essential to be disproved, if their own suppositions are to carry any weight.

Because the Bible alone is the revelation of God, and because God created the universe, no other writing that contradicts it and no geological discovery that runs counter to its teaching are reliable. The Bible is not a book of science and does not purport to be. But it can be stated without equivocation that in those scientific subjects on which it touches it is accurate to the letter. Writings and discoveries that do not confirm its teachings are in error, for God is omniscient, and He cannot lie.

3. The God-Given Record of the Origin of the Universe and the Creation of the World

The Bible begins with the beginnings: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called

the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:1-5).

Almost all the objections to the Genesis account may be found in, or consequent to, these first five verses. We have not space to consider every one of the arguments, but shall confine ourselves to a discussion of three of the most prominent against the accuracy of the opening chapter of the Bible. The first has to do with the date of creation, and submits that geology has proved the chronology of Genesis to be wrong. The second has to do with the length of the first six days. And the third calls in question two references to the creation of light, suggesting that, since light and darkness were effected on the first day, the authenticity of the making of the sun and moon on the fourth day is questionable.

As to the date of creation, no one knows when it was. Usher's chronology dates Genesis 1 at 4004 B.C., and in view of the fact that geological formations have been found and fossils uncovered that indicate a much earlier period of the earth's existence, by thousands of years, we are told that the Genesis account is not only unacceptable, but fantastic, to say the least.

Conservative scholarship is ready to agree, however, that Usher's chronology and those of many others are unreliable before about 2500 B.C. As to the date of that which is recorded in Genesis 1:1, it is promptly admitted that it may have been tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago. For the creation of Genesis 1:1 clearly predates the second part of Genesis 1:2. In between them something took place which is written in the first sentence of the second verse, and this is confirmed elsewhere in Scripture.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That tells us the origin of the universe—the heavens and the earth were created by God. "And the earth was without

form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Here it is submitted that some cataclysmic disaster or judgment took hold of the earth. This is not fanciful, nor is it speculation. Other Scriptures substantiate this interpretation.

First, observe the word translated *was*. According to reputable scholars, it would be rendered better as *became*. So it is in chapter 2:7: “and man *became* a living soul,” and again in 19:26: “and she [Lot’s wife] *became* a pillar of salt.” The earth was not created “without form, and void”; it *became* that way. According to Isaiah 45:18 this interpretation is correct: “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited . . .” The same Hebrew word *tohu* appears in both passages: in Genesis 1:2 the earth became *tohu*—*waste, without form*; while in Isaiah it is said that God did *not create* it *tohu*—*waste, without form*. And that a condition of perfection and beauty existed between the time that the earth was first created and the creation we know, which Adam and Eve enjoyed, is intimated in the rebuke of the king of Tyre, in Ezekiel 28, which is considered to be a rebuke of Satan himself. There it is said of him that he was in Eden, an Eden of precious stones, a garden of minerals (vs. 13). The only Eden that we know, other than this, is our first parents’ garden, and that was not one of minerals, but of vegetable growth.

When was Satan in his Eden? Nothing is said of it since the earth’s creation recorded from Genesis 1:2b, but it may have existed on the earth of Genesis 1:1. At any rate, it seems quite clear that the earth was created perfectly, and not *tohu abohu*, “topsy-turvy”; that disaster came upon it, and that it was again formed by the Word of God. How much time elapsed between Genesis 1:1 and the first sentence of verse 2, we do not know; nor how much between the first

and second sentences of the second verse. It may have been of long duration or short; thousands or even millions of years may have passed. We are not told, but can only conjecture.

“And the evening and the morning were the first day” (vs. 5). Was this day of the same length as the present day—twenty-four hours? We take issue with those who contend that this would be an impossibility, who maintain that that which it is said was done in the first day, or the second, could not have been brought to pass in twenty-four hours. Ours is a God of omnipotence. Nothing is too hard for Him, who knows no impossibilities. He said: “Let there be light,” and there was light; and He divided the light from the darkness. If He willed it, this could have been accomplished in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, or less. But we can also see that the days of creation may have been longer than twenty-four hours each, and again, we have Scripture to substantiate our declaration.

The word *day* is used in the Bible to denote various periods of time or events. There is the day of twenty-four hours, but there are other “days”—there is that portion of the twenty-four hour day which is known as *the day* in contrast to the night (1:5); the word *day* is used also in respect to a whole period of time in which something was done, as: “in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens”; and again, it denotes an indefinite period which might cover a few or many years, as in such expressions as “the day of the Lord,” “the day of salvation,” and “the day of judgment.” It is clear that the word *day* is not always confined to a period of twenty-four hours. We do not state dogmatically that the six days of creation were not days of twenty-four hours. They could have been, but they need not have been. Whatever God does is done perfectly, and He is sovereign and determines His times and seasons.

Geologists tell us that there were certain ages in geologic chronology. And those periods, which covered many hundreds of years each, show in a general way that in the first period no signs of life appeared upon the earth; in the second, there was animal life in the oceans; in the third, fossils of plants indicate vegetation as having been the only living thing on earth; and then animal life (excepting man) appeared on earth as the final stage of prehistoric history. These scientists have discovered much of weighty import, but it is to be observed that, in the particular hypothesis just mentioned, they have reversed the order of Genesis in placing the animal life in the oceans before the existence of plant life on earth, and we doubt not that time will prove their conclusions erroneous. For while the Bible was given us to show us "man's complete ruin in sin and God's perfect remedy in Christ," and not as a text book on science, every scientific fact contained in the Word of God is authoritative and accurate. The Bible account of creation is inerrant.

Just as there is the possibility of thousands or more years having elapsed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2a, and again between 1:2a and 1:2b, so it is also within the realm of feasibility, and not unscriptural at all, that the "days" of creation each consumed periods of years, or centuries, or longer. The discoveries of geologists and archeologists do not contradict the Bible at all. Rather, as time goes on their findings serve to confirm and not to deny—though we hold that God's Word needs no confirmation from men.

Now, what of the Genesis record of the first and fourth days? On the first day it is said that God said, "Let there be light," and then, that He divided light from darkness, calling the former "the day" and the latter "the night" (vss. 3-5). Of the fourth day it is told: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for

seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" (vss. 14-19).

We do not see why there is so much difficulty about the works of these two days. God could make a difference between light and darkness even without the sun. Such a difference was made first of all in the universe as a whole. In the second case His work was in specific relation to the earth. It was not necessary that there should be a sun and a moon, but they were given by His sovereign will, not only to divide the day from the night, but also "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years"; and surely we know that the movements, in respect to earth, of the sun, moon, and stars, are the governing factors in the seasons, and years, etc.

We have purposely employed above the expression that the sun, moon, and stars move in respect to the earth, which is unscientific, to say the least. For it is a well-known astronomical fact that it is the earth that is the satellite of the heavenly bodies, and that the earth moves on its axis in relation to the sun and moon, and not they in respect to the earth. The language of the Bible, however, is the language of the common man, and not that of astronomy or science. Men speak of things in general and the phenomena of the universe as they appear to them. Surely God knows the courses of the planets. Yet the Word of God again and again mentions the "setting" of the sun, or its "rising." Well, so do the scientists themselves; yet surely they are not unscientific!

Thus we might go on with the creation account in Genesis, and so also with the objections to it proffered by unbelief. But as for us, we are satisfied that God has done all things well and has revealed that which He would have us know. We are not troubled by theories, hypotheses; we are convinced that any facts that the world of science has uncovered or will yet discover will harmonize with the Scriptures. It cannot be otherwise, for God is a God of order, and not of confusion.

“In the beginning God . . .” He, who always was, created the heavens and the earth. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God” (Psa. 90:2). “Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, for ever.”

CHAPTER XIII

MAN: HIS CREATION, HIS FALL, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

It can be fairly assumed that no science has called forth more philosophical reasoning throughout the ages, or has been the cause of more human speculation, than the science of man, to determine his origin and primal estate. Schools of thought may be divided into two great classes: one, investigation that denies or ignores the Bible; and two, inquiry that takes God at His Word. Whatever solution the first proposes can be nothing other than human theory. The answer that is found in the Bible, however, is divine revelation.

It is not our purpose here to project the theories and speculations of men of science, whose name is legion, that ignore the revelation of God, or to seek to answer them. The Strausses, the Huxleys, the Tyndalls, and the Darwins have penned their papers which have been widely read and heralded, but they have not given mankind the truth. Most honorable and skilled scientists will acknowledge that this is so, and the proof is sure, in that human reasoning is still seeking the solution in spite of all that the original proponents of the multitudinous speculations have set forth, but seeking it apart from God.

Charles Darwin is perhaps the most popular of the evolutionists, who differs from his predecessors and contemporaries chiefly in that they start with dead matter, and he with life; for while they undertake to demonstrate that the origin of life was from physical causes, Darwin presupposes the existence of germs, that is, living cells. Darwin is more honest and candid, however, than the rest of the naturalistic school, and more so than his present-day disciples—for he admits that there are grave objections to his teaching, and

that he cannot prove it. And while in a vague sort of way God is introduced into the Darwinian theory, in that it assumes that hundreds of thousands of years ago God first brought into existence one or more living germs, the suggestion that since that time God has had nothing to do with the universe classes Darwin's doctrine as truly as atheistic as Huxley's and the rest of the scientists, who have delved into these things apart from divine revelation.

Let the anthropologists and geologists and archeologists give incontestable proof to their findings, if they can. Hypotheses are not facts. Let the anthropologists find more than five fossil fragments of bones in ancient rock strata—purported to be a skull cap, three teeth, and a thigh bone—before they create another *pithecanthropus erectus* and introduce it to a credulous world. Almost any kind of creature could have been the possessor of those fossilized bones. Let the geologists agree within some quarter of a million years as to the earth's age and come to some accord regarding the duration of the Pleistocene period, etc.; and let the archeologists prove that because in certain places they unearth stone and no bronze, while in others, bronze and no stone, these findings demonstrate beyond contradiction that the utensils unearthed belong respectively to the "Stone Age" and the "Bronze Age," before they endeavor to refute the Scripture chronology. And let the evolutionists give us hybrids that are not sterile before they rest their case. A mule is a hybrid; it is the offspring of an ass and a mare. It cannot reproduce itself, for it is the law of nature, that is, the law of God, that each species shall produce only after its own kind (Gen. 1:21-25).

Unless and until science can build a better case—and it cannot do so in defiance to the Word of God ("let God be true, but every man a liar" [Rom. 3:4])—we shall abide by the Bible. Yes, and we shall ever do so, for it is God's iner-

rant Word. There it is written: "And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them . . . And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7). There we have the true record of the origin and primal state of man, as God created him, and as He recorded it by His Holy Spirit. This we believe and accept; it is divine revelation, and cannot be gainsaid.

Our considerations will fall into three major divisions.

1. Man's Origin and Primal State

According to the Biblical account of man's origin, just cited, three times it is declared that God created man and thrice, too, that man was created in God's image. Man's body did not develop from some protoplasm, from a germ-cell or other matter, nor did it evolve from a fungus or a tadpole. God formed it from the dust of the earth. Man's soul did not come into being by chance, nor did it expand through processes of environment and selection. God breathed the breath of life into man, and he became a living soul. With clarity and finality divine revelation informs us of man's creation as no other book can, nor any voice. It speaks with complete authority. Its Author was there when it took place. He performed the supernatural act of creation, the divine act. Any theory that ignores His revelation and leaves Him out of the creation is false. It cannot be otherwise.

There are two specific divine exercises involved: one, man's body was formed by God; and second, his soul was

derived from God. We may thus classify, in a broad sense, the component parts which make up man as two: the *material* and the *immaterial*. The relation between the two parts, so-called, is mysterious and not wholly comprehensible. That the material and immaterial are a unity cannot be denied. Without the soul, the body is dead; without the body, the soul is incomplete. The vital union is broken, then, when the body dies, but only temporarily; for all will be raised, the righteous unto life everlasting and the unbelieving to eternal condemnation (John 5:28, 29; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 20:11-15).

A. The Material Part of Man

The material part of man is the active, physical, and visible body by which we recognize him. In creation it was formed of the dust of the ground, and to the ground it will return (Gen. 2:7; 3:19). It is interesting in this connection to observe that science has found the human body to have sixteen chemical constituents which are elements of the soil; namely: calcium, carbon, chlorine, fluorine, hydrogen, iodine, iron, magnesium, manganese, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, potassium, silicon, sodium, and sulphur. These, some in inorganic form, with water and gases, comprise the human body, "formed . . . of the dust of the ground."

The body of a man may be thought of as that portion of his being that possesses sense consciousness. With the body he sees and hears and speaks; it is the bodily function to taste and to smell; the body is sensitive to pain. It operates generally under the control of the soul, through the mind; however, in certain essentials of life its performance is not subject to the mind, but is automatic, as it were, as in the matters of the beating of the heart, digestive functioning, the flowing of the blood through the arteries, etc. However, so fully are the material and immaterial parts of man unified

that there is no consciousness within him of any duality—he thinks of himself as residing within his body, as he does; yet he thinks of his body as himself, and it is.

B. The Immaterial Part of Man

The immaterial part of man is that part of him which God breathed into him at creation, the breath of life, whereby he “became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). This in-breathing is distinct from life given to animals; it was an act of God at man’s creation whereby the human body, differing from other creatures, was made the recipient of life which is endless. Because of sin, the body dies. But the soul does not cease to exist at the death of the body. On account of sin, however, the soul, too, is subject to death, a different kind of death, namely, eternal death, that is, separation from God. Only through faith, and by the gift of God, can the soul escape the penalty of sin. This reconciliation is made possible by virtue of the death of the sinless Son of God for sin, and is accomplished by another and different in-breathing—the in-breathing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, alluded to in John 20:22, where it is recorded that the risen Christ breathed upon His disciples, saying: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (cf. Acts 2:1-4; Titus 3:5). As the body of the first man, Adam, was the only human body formed by creative act of the dust of the ground, so the soul of the first man was the only one said to be created a living soul by the life-giving breath of God. The first woman, of course, was created in a special way, from the side of the man, but it is not recorded that God breathed life into Eve’s nostrils. And ever since that time, life for the body and the soul has been accomplished by natural generative process.

Any further consideration of the immaterial part of man brings us to a subject which is complex, to say the least, and upon which there has been much theological discussion.

Some hold that man is *dichotomous*, that is, that he is composed simply of the two parts mentioned in Genesis 2:7—body and soul. Others hold that man is *trichotomous*, that his component parts comprise three elements—body, soul, and spirit. There is Scripture, it appears, to support both views. Dichotomy is truth, but incomplete truth, as we view it: man *is* dichotomous, in that he consists of the material and the immaterial, called in Genesis 2, the body and the soul. Yet he is trichotomous, for the immaterial element, called collectively “the soul,” is itself composed of two distinctive parts, the soul and the spirit.

There are certain Scriptures where the words *soul* and *spirit* seem to be employed synonymously. There are other passages where there appears to be clear differentiation between the two terms. We have not space to cite every reference in question, nor is it within the compass of this study to discuss the matter in full. A few cases will illustrate the synonymy and differentiation in the use of the words.

Sometimes the word *spirit* (Gr. *pneuma*; Heb. *ruah*) is employed to indicate the immaterial part of man (1 Cor. 5:3; 6:20), but in other instances the word *soul* (Gr. *psuchē*; Heb. *nephesh*) is used with like purpose (Matt. 10:28; Acts 2:31). Occasionally those whose bodies have died are referred to as *spirits* while at other times they are alluded to as *souls* (Heb. 12:23; 1 Kings 17:21, 22). Both words are used on occasion to denote quite similar activities or functions (Matt. 26:38; cf. Mark 8:12; John 12:27; cf. John 11:33). From these references it might be thought that the two expressions are interchangeable. But counterbalancing these citations are others, as for example, Hebrews 4:12, where we are told that the Word of God, which is living and powerful, pierces “to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.” Again, a clear distinction is shown in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your

whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Another* has drawn specific attention to 1 Corinthians 15:44: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"; and we quote:

" . . . 1 Corinthians 15:44 is too often wholly ignored, yet it presents a field of distinction which is immeasurable. The English translation, *natural*, obscures the fact from the usual reader that reference here is to the present body which is said to be adapted to the *soul*, as in contrast to that body which is future and is adapted to the *spirit*. The future body is like unto Christ's glorious body and the difference, as here measured, between the present body—corruptible, dishonorable, weak, and soulish—and the resurrection body—incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and of the spirit—measures that which is the outlook and capacity of the spirit."

We are not forgetting that there are other elements composing the immaterial part of man, as the heart and the mind. Again, there are instances where the Greek *psuchee*, properly rendered *soul*, is also translated *life*, as in Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his *life* (*psucheen*) a ransom for many." But it could have been rendered *soul* without changing the meaning in the slightest degree.

We conclude, therefore, that in a very general sense man is composed of the two parts mentioned in the creation story—body and soul; but that more specifically, he is a trinity, the soul being made of two parts—soul and spirit. Man, then, has a body, a soul, and a spirit. No definition can be wholly satisfactory, we propose, for the subject is as mysterious as life itself. But in broad sense we may say that the *body* is *sense-conscious*, subject to feeling; the *soul* is *self-*

*Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., in a series on Systematic Theology ("Anthropology") appearing in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January-March, 1944.

conscious, that is, it is the ego, the seat of one's individualism, and is closely identified with the mind; and the *spirit* is *God-conscious* (cf. Rom. 8:16). An animal has a soul, but no spirit. The soul and spirit of a man are inseparable, even though the body be dead. Thus man is himself a trinity—body, soul, and spirit; sensibility, intellect, and will.

As to man's original state, he was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). Does this mean that in his corporeal form man is like God? No! "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). But our risen Lord said to His troubled disciples, who thought Him to be a spirit: "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke 24:39). It was not in bodily appearance that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but in another way.

In Ephesians 4:23, 24, we read of Christians, those who have been born anew, that they are to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In Colossians 3:10 it is said that the new man is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." It seems entirely reasonable to suppose, therefore, that in such a fashion the first man was created in the image of God, that is, in righteousness, true holiness, and knowledge. Certainly, our first parents, their creation being "very good," possessed intellect and moral stature bestowed by God and after His likeness, in that He is the perfect possessor of intellect and will. Adam had knowledge: first of all he knew God and was in perfect fellowship with Him; second, he was created mature and received as his dominion the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every living thing that moved upon the earth. He named the innumerable creatures of God's fashioning. His mind was attuned to the mind of God. And he possessed "righteousness and holiness of the truth"

(lit.). His righteousness and holiness were perhaps more passive than active because it was righteousness and holiness in innocence. But being without sin, righteous and holy in respect to the truth of God—until he was tempted and fell—his creation was in the image and likeness of God.

This was man's first estate—and until sin entered his heart, he did the will of God.

2. Man's Fall

While we speak of it as "the Fall of Man," the first human transgression was participated in by both of our first parents.

The account of the Fall is given in simple and graphic terms in Genesis 3. We shall not take space to defend the record against those who would term it mythological or allegorical. In the chapter dealing with the Inspiration of the Scriptures we have stated our case. Here it is sufficient merely to call attention to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ accepted the Mosaic account as literal (Matt. 19:4, 5) as did Paul (1 Tim. 2:13, 14).

At his creation man was put into the Garden of Eden to "dress it and to keep it," and he was commanded of God: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16, 17). We are not told how long Adam and Eve lived in that estate of innocence and obedience and fellowship with God; it may have been for many, many years. There came a day, however, when Satan, through the serpent, tempted the woman by implanting within her mind doubt as to the wisdom and power of God. The account is found in Genesis 3. "Yea, hath God said," the serpent inquired of Eve, "'Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" In her reply she added to the Word of God, showing rebellion in her very speech. "We may eat of the

fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' " Now there is no record that God had forbidden our first parents from touching the tree, but only from eating its fruit. The serpent said in reply: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God (not *gods*—the word is *Elohim*, the same that is used earlier in the verse and rendered properly, *God*), knowing good and evil."

In passing, we would make two comments. First, it is immaterial what kind of fruit grew on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It need in no wise have been a special fruit now unknown, but any fruit tree of God's selection to test man as to his obedience or disobedience to divine command. And second, since Adam was created in knowledge after the image of God, he knew the difference between obedience and disobedience. Here, then, "the knowledge of good and evil" was experimental knowledge. He had had to this time no experience of evil, for he was still in innocence.

At any rate, Satan, the rebel, who himself had sought to be like the Most High (Isa. 14:14) and as a consequence fell from his first estate, here tempted the woman with the same ambition. She was deceived (1 Tim. 2:14), and seeing that the tree was "desired to make one wise," partook of it. She "gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Adam's sin, however, was not through being deceived, but a deliberate and wilful act of rebellion (1 Tim. 2:14). What happened? "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

This is not an exposition of the third chapter of Genesis. What we have stated is written to show the nature of man's first transgression—disobedience, or rebellion against God.

It was against Him that Adam and Eve sinned, and it is noteworthy that in their nakedness, the obvious result of their sin, it was not from each other that they hid, but from God. It was He whom they feared; for the man said: "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Sin broke communion and fellowship with God. Man himself was aware of the fact that he could not stand before the holiness of the Lord God. Adam's transgression caused him to be naked, bankrupt before the Almighty. He could not face Him, and he knew it.

God's Word proved true, and Satan's word false. For the Creator had told the creature: "In the day that thou eatest thereof [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die." And that day death fell upon Adam and Eve—spiritually, physically, and eternally. At the moment that they sinned spiritual death, separation from God, descended upon them; they were dead in trespass and sin. At the same time they became subject to physical death; for God said: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). And eternal death, too, was their lot, to be avoided only by God's grace, through faith.

So man fell from his first estate to absolute and complete ruin in sin. How God's gracious remedy was provided, and what it is, is not a part of this paper, but will be discussed in another chapter.

3. The Consequences of Man's Fall

The effect of the Fall of Man did not end with Adam. The very ground itself, all creation, suffered by the Fall (Gen. 3:17-19; *cf.* Rom. 8:21-23). And by that first act of sin man became altered. No longer was he the same as he was created, but he now possessed a fallen nature, a sinful nature; and became alienated from God. And it is that nature that has been inherited by every son and daughter

of Adam and Eve (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3), because they could only give to posterity the nature that they themselves possessed. While Adam became a sinner by sinning, since then man sins *because* he is a sinner. By nature and by practice he is such, and is therefore under the judgment of sin, whose wages is death (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:9, 23; 6:23; Gal. 3:22). Thus, in Adam all are subject to the wrath of God and sin's condemnation (1 Cor. 15:22).

Thank God, that holy and righteous as He is, He is also loving and merciful and gracious, and so rich is He in these attributes, that He gave His only begotten Son as the divine Substitute and Propitiation for sin. Its just penalty, death, was paid by Christ on the Cross, where God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Through the blood of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ reconciliation has been effected for all things in Heaven and on earth, and we, "that were sometime alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1:20, 21).

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

CHAPTER XIV

SIN

Sin is a subject with which we are all too familiar experimentally. It is a depressing subject as well, for it is the direct antithesis to the holiness and righteousness of God and to what He would have us to be. The Bible has a great deal to say about sin, however, and it is therefore necessary that we allot place and space to the subject. This necessity evolves for many reasons, of which we state but two: (1) A true measure of what sin is, of its heinousness, is to be gauged by the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only as we observe the humiliation and sufferings and death for sin of the Holy One and the Just, the Son of God, can we estimate its enormity. (2) If there is no sense of the disease there will be no resort to the Physician. Therefore it is important that the exceeding sinfulness of sin be recognized. Sin is a matter that is very near to every one of us; it is the cause of eternal death to the unregenerate, and of broken fellowship, unhappy Christian experience, and stultified witness to those who have been redeemed from its curse through faith in the Son of God. It is only when sin in the individual life is recognized, acknowledged, and confessed, and resort is made to Him who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, our Lord Jesus Christ, that right relationship and perfect fellowship with God are established. For in Christ we have been made the righteousness of God.

Our consideration of the subject will fall into four major divisions.

1. The Fact of Sin and Its Universality

We do not need the Bible to tell us that sin exists. Honest estimation of ourselves and observation of our fellow men compel us to admit sin's reality. So it is that entirely apart

from divine revelation philosophers of every age and of every school have admitted the existence of sin and have discussed it, speculating upon its cause, its nature, and its cure. Human speculation, however, which ignores man's responsibility to God in the matter of sin cannot arrive at the truth. The facts about sin's origin, its universality, its nature, its results, and its remedy are known to the Omniscient God. He has revealed these facts in His Word, and thus we are not obliged to depend upon human speculation.

The earliest and most distinct picture we have of our first parents is the record of their sin against God in disobeying His command about the tree of life and of their futile endeavor to hide from Him because they were afraid. The first baby ever born into this world became a murderer, while his brother, Abel, was also a sinner who needed to bring an offering of blood to the Lord God (Gen. 4:4).

Then, following a delineation of the progeny of Adam and announcement of the advance of civilization on earth, we read: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). So God sent a flood upon the earth in judgment—only Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and his family being spared. After the deluge, the first recorded act of Noah after he built an altar to God (although considerable time had elapsed) is that of his drunkenness. And as we read through the accounts of the lives of the Old Testament heroes we find them sinning, one after another—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and the kings of Israel and Judah who followed. While the prophet Isaiah declares of mankind: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6), thus signifying that the condition is universal,

and that even those things in us which we consider to be righteous are loathsome in the light of God's holiness.

Familiar verses in the Epistle to the Romans will serve to establish not only the fact of sin, but also its universality, for in these words every man and woman is indicted and proved guilty before God because of sin: "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? . . . No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:5, 9, 10, 12, 23).

If we are not sufficiently honest to admit the blackness of our own hearts, out of which proceed "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, [and] foolishness" to defile us (Mark 7:21-23), we cannot intelligently ignore the indictment of God that there is none righteous, but that all have sinned.

2. The Nature and Result of Sin

Since sin exists and since all men are sinners, we need to ask certain questions: "What is sin?" "How did sin begin, if God, the Creator, is perfect in holiness?" "What was the result of sin?"

There is no want of words in the Scriptures to describe man's moral condition. Examining only the chief words in both Testaments we find ten Hebrew and eleven Greek terms to denote what sin is in itself. There are, first of all, the corresponding Hebrew *chata'* and the Greek *hamartia*, both of which are rendered *sin* in our Bible and come from root verbs meaning *to miss the mark*. Other words may be rendered literally: *turning from the right course*, *transgressing*, *revolting*

from authority, distorting the right, disobedience, negligence; departure from God, want of justice, evil, and guilt before God, and these by no means exhaust the long list. For the purpose of our study of the subject we shall define sin as being that inherent attitude of mind and specific action in all men which causes them to be less holy and righteous than the perfect glory of God; want of conformity to the perfect law of God, which includes pollution and guilt before Him.

As to how sin began, in view of the fact that the Creator-God is Himself perfect in holiness, it is the result of God's sovereign will to give to His creatures free will, to obey Him or to disobey. Sin began in the universe when Satan, known as "Lucifer, the son of the morning," rebelled against God, saying in his heart: "I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:12-14). Sin began on earth with man, when that same Lucifer, Satan, tempted the woman, Eve, who listened to his voice. Adam and Eve disobeyed God; they rebelled against the Most High, and, doing so, became sinners. What was the result?

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, became sinners by sinning. But they are the last to whom that order applies. All other men have sinned because they are sinners. For Adam, having a fallen nature, could not transmit to his progeny aught but a nature like his own. Thus every baby born into the world, beginning with Cain and since him (excepting the blessed Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit), has been born with a sinful nature, born a sinner. Adam, the federal head of the race, has transmitted to all the fruit of his rebellion against God, his corrupt nature, so that all men are born in sin. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," our Lord said to Nicodemus (John 3:6), while Paul

puts it this way: We all “were *by nature* the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3); and John: “The whole world lieth in wickedness [the wicked one]” (1 John 5:19). Thus it is written in 1 Corinthians, in connection with sin’s penalty, that “by man came death . . . for . . . in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:21, 22). The classic passage is, however, Romans 5:12-20. We quote only from the twelfth and nineteenth verses: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. . . . For . . . by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”

Some may object to the doctrine that we were *born into the world* sinners, emphasizing the words “all *have* sinned” to the exclusion of those that declare that “by one man sin entered into the world,” and that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” They will say, in effect: “We admit to having sinned against God, but we do not agree that we were born in sin. Little babies are innocent. They are naughty at times, but even that naughtiness is lovable.” But that is because of the grace of love, and not because of the loveliness of naughtiness—the very words are obviously antithetical.

What do the Scriptures say? “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. 8:21). “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5). “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Psa. 58:3). And, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one” (Job 14:4). That which is born of a corrupt nature cannot be other than corrupt. Thus sin is inherent. Man is born with the pollution, guilt, and penalty of sin upon him. He is a sinner by nature. He is born in sin, and not one precious baby could be redeemed were it not for the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ died for sin on the Cross of Calvary. The sin of Adam is imputed to every

man. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

Not only are we sinners by nature, but we are sinners by choice and practice as well—thus we are dead in trespasses and sins. To trespass is deliberately to go our own way; to sin is to miss the mark. All of us have committed such sins. For wilful sin is sin committed by action or failure to act, physically or mentally. And all have transgressed God's holy law in both of these ways.

Man is born in sin, and is thus a sinner by nature. He has imputed to him the sin of Adam, and is thus a sinner by reckoning, by conclusion (Rom. 11:32). He sins by wilful and deliberate action, and thus is a sinner by practice. Of him we read that "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22)—and the wages of sin is death.

3. The Penalty for Sin

Our discussion at this point has been anticipated by the last six words of the preceding paragraph—"the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). But there is more involved in sin's penalty than the statement alone, as we shall see.

We must understand that this judgment upon sin is righteous judgment. God is perfect in holiness and righteousness, for He is perfection. He created man in His own image, and that created being was without sin. The first man became a sinner by disobedience to God, through rebellion. It was God's holy decree, His sovereign law, as clearly and unequivocally stated in Genesis 2:17: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve ate of that tree. God would have been untrue, unrighteous to have abrogated the penalty that He ordained. So we read: "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died" (Gen. 5:5).

But that was Adam's physical death. Spiritually, too, he died on the day he sinned (of which physical death is a symbol), for in that instant he became separated from God, unable to stand in His holy presence because of sin. Nor does spiritual death cease when the body is put into the grave. It continues forever *unless* man, while still on earth, avails himself of the free grace of God through faith in the divine provision and remedy for sin.

The penalty of sin, then, is death. "In Adam all die," all are concluded to be "under sin" (1 Cor. 15:22; Gal. 3:22; *cf.* Rom. 11:32). By his sin the first man, who had been created "in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24), became alienated from God. And thus all men, Adam's progeny, are likewise alienated and enemies by wicked works, and are "by nature the children of wrath" (Col. 1:21; Eph. 2:3). So it is written, in a passage already alluded to: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. . . . Through the offence of one many be dead. . . . By one man's offence death reigned by one. . . . By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:12-18).

Since, then, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God . . . [and since] . . . the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 3:23; 6:23), we conclude that all must die because of sin. More, all *are* dead—spiritually and judicially, in trespasses and sins, upon whom the wrath of God must descend in condemnation (Eph. 2:1-3; John 3:18, 36). This is sin's penalty, and that penalty must be paid, else God would be unrighteous. Is there no hope, then? There is hope, but there is no remission of sin, no forgiveness, no salvation, apart from sin's penalty being met. A seeming paradox, that there can be hope when there is no remission unless sin's penalty is paid, has been answered by divine wisdom.

4. The Remedy for Sin

Divine provision has been made for the sins of mankind. In His justice God could not, despite His love and mercy, forgive sin apart from its penalty being paid. Else He would not be Himself, He would not be holy. If this be so, what escape is there for the sinner? The answer is a glorious fact beyond human comprehension. By God's grace we are saved, through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). What does that mean? We are the recipients of the grace of God, of His unmerited favor. We deserve to die because of sin, but instead of our receiving our just desert, we receive that which we do not merit—through faith.

This takes us back to the need of the penalty being paid, for “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). How can God forgive, unless His righteous demand be met? He cannot—*but the penalty has been paid*. For the Holy Son of God emptied Himself of the glory which was His in Heaven, and was made in the likeness of men, even to the extent of coming into this world of ours as all of us have come, being born of a woman (but of a virgin, and conceived by the Holy Spirit); “and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross” (Phil. 2:8). There at Calvary the sinless Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, took our sins upon Himself. There He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). On the Cross the penalty for sin was paid by the Holy One and the Just. There, because He died for us, God's righteousness in forgiving sin was vindicated, and He is able to extend His gracious love and mercy to us in forgiveness and salvation. For the blood of the Son of God was shed for the remission of sin, and we who are sinners have been justified before God, through faith, merely by believing in Him

as the Son of God and only Saviour (John 3:16, etc.), through trusting in Him and what He accomplished there. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21, 22). And now we may cite other portions of the passage referred to earlier: "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. . . . Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:15, 18, 19). Where sin once reigned unto death, now grace reigns by Christ through righteousness unto eternal life.

God's justice has been satisfied. We have been justified. Immediately a question comes to mind: "If by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon *all* men unto justification of life, and as it is written, in Christ *all* shall be made alive, then are *all* men forgiven and will *all* men be saved?" All *could* be, if they would accept Christ's sacrifice for them through faith, if they would believe it and receive it. But all will not believe it. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . . *He that believeth on Him* is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because he hath not believed* in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. . . . By grace are ye saved *through faith*. . . . Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation *through faith in His blood*" (John 3:16, 18; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 3:24, 25). Christ died for all, but all will not have life, for they will not believe in Him.

The divine provision, the divine remedy for sin is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). Before Calvary, sin was "covered," as it were, by the burnt-offerings and sacrifices, the blood of bulls and of goats, which could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4), but which made atonement for sin, anticipating the Cross of Christ, until He should die and deal with the matter in finality. Pre-Calvary forgiveness was accomplished through faith in the divine substitute of God's provision, a symbol of the perfect, vicarious Sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Post-Calvary forgiveness is through faith in the divine Substitute, that same Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. The Remedy for sin is Christ. Without Him and apart from His shed blood, man is lost; with Him and in Him, there is forgiveness, salvation and life.

Not only has the death of Christ dealt with the sin question in respect to the sins of the past, but we who have been redeemed, who are Christians, plead that blood and its efficacy in the matter of the sins of the present. By the Cross and the Empty Tomb we have forgiveness for sin and power over sin. The whole teaching of Romans 6 reveals to us how that, concerning Christians, the old man, all that we were before we were born again, died with Christ. Judicially we who were dead in trespasses and sins have been crucified with Christ, buried with Him in baptism into death; and that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now he that is dead is freed from sin, and he that is raised from the dead, walking in newness of life, is the master and not the servant of sin. So we are to reckon ourselves, that is, count it as real, that we have died unto sin and are alive unto God.

But in spite of this practical and vital truth, in spite of the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we do fail, we do sin.

The world, the flesh, and the devil are very real. The conflict is great—for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). We need to be aware of the foe, to be armed with the whole armor of God, to find our strength in the Lord and in the power of His might. Having all this provision, all the resources of God's bounty, and new life in Christ, and having ever exalted on high an Intercessor (Heb. 9:24), yet we are caught unawares, and we fail; we are unguarded or wilfully disobedient, and we sin. What can we do? Is there no hope? The sins of the past are remitted, but how about those of today? Because of them our fellowship with God is broken. What recourse do we have, then? "If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). And thank God, when we do sin, His forgiveness is not unrighteous, but just; it is righteous forgiveness, because Christ died and rose again, who is our Advocate at the Father's right hand, our divine propitiation for sin (1 John 2:1, 2; cf. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24).

Seeing, then, that there is sin, that we are all guilty and lost sinners by nature and practice, let us thank God for the divine Remedy, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who did no sin . . . who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:22, 24). "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

CHAPTER XV

REPENTANCE, AND FAITH

There are three things that are very closely related to each other. The first two might be termed attitudes, and the third, a condition. They are repentance, faith, and regeneration.

Among theologians there is not entire agreement as to the relative order in which these states of mind and heart take place. There are some, for example, who will argue that faith precedes repentance, inasmuch as believers in Christ are told to repent (see, e.g., Rev. 2:5). Others suggest that regeneration must take place before there can be faith, citing as proof text 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Unless we err grievously, however, the proper order (if the action is not coincident) is —repentance, faith, and regeneration. We do not insist upon this; in fact, as we shall seek to show, repentance will also follow faith, and faith will likewise follow regeneration.

There are some godly Bible students who oppose the teaching and preaching of repentance for this age, assigning this doctrine entirely to the dispensation of the Law. They submit that salvation today is entirely by grace and that therefore the act of repentance on the part of the sinner suggests that there is something that he can do toward earning salvation. But we believe this to be false reasoning from a true premise.

In every age man's salvation has been dependent entirely upon God's grace. Let there be no misunderstanding on this score. Neither sacrifices, nor ritual, nor any works of the Law were ever able to save one single soul. "No man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for,

The just shall live by faith. . . . If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:11, 21). In every dispensation justification before God has been received *freely by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The sacrifices of old were but coverings of sin, looking forward to the Cross of Christ; salvation, forgiveness, and justification are based upon the atoning work of the Son of God, which was wrought for all men at Calvary. But if His sacrifice is to be effectual for any individual of any age, that individual must repent of his sins and believe the Gospel of God. Such a one—whether he were of the dispensation of Promise, as Abraham; or of the age of the Law, as Moses; or of the economy of Grace, as Cornelius; or whether he be living today under Grace—is justified through faith by the grace of God and in no other way.

Repentance is an essential on the part of him who would be saved in this age as well as in any other, for "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). So is faith essential, that is, faith in God, for it is through faith that man becomes the recipient of eternal life.

We shall consider the subjects of repentance and faith individually.

1. Repentance

Before we determine exactly what repentance is, suppose we give our attention to certain things, attitudes which do not constitute repentance, as a means of clarifying the final definition of the word.

Remorse is not repentance. To have remorse is to be sorry at having erred, but it does not of necessity suggest a desire to change one's course in the future. Judas, for example, suffered remorse for his diabolic deed of betraying the Saviour. In Matthew 27:3 it is said that he "repented

himself," but the Greek word *metameletheis* (from *metamelomai*) means *to change one's judgment on past issues; to regret*, without any suggestion of a new purpose. It is not the same word as the noun, *metanoia*, meaning *a change of mode of thinking; repentance*. One who is repentant will suffer remorse at past sins, but remorse is not of necessity repentance.

Penitence is not repentance. To be penitent is *to be sorrowful for one's sins, conscious of one's guilt; contrite*. The word differs from remorse in the sense that remorse implies no more than regret for having sinned, or having been caught sinning; while penitence implies a sense of guilt, and some desire to act differently. One who is repentant will suffer penitence, but penitence is not of necessity repentance.

Reformation is not repentance. Laudable as the desire to start afresh may be, it may be held, and in fact there may be a turning to better living, without any recognition of sin or guilt, and without any giving of the heart to God. It may be self-effort that meets with some success manward, but not Godward, to whom even our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). One who is repentant will desire to live differently, but reformation is not of necessity identical with repentance.

Penance is not repentance. To do penance is *to endeavor to atone for wrong done*, and carries with it, obviously, the recognition of guilt and the desire for pardon. But in relation to God there is nothing that man can do to atone for his sins. In the flesh there dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18). Thank God, our sins were all atoned for by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, on the Cross of Calvary. There He suffered sin's penalty; there, He died, the Just for the unjust, to make atonement for sin. One who is repentant will seek to atone for wrongs done to his fellow men and to please God, but penance is not repentance.

What, then, is repentance? It is *a change of mode of thinking*, as we have already declared, that is, *a change of mind*. In Biblical usage it alludes to a change of mind about self, about sin, and about God. It is a turning about from self and sin to God. Thus, in the Old Testament, the word *turn* is employed. We cite a few passages as illustration. "If thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God); He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee" (Deut. 4:30, 31). "If they pray toward this place, and confess Thy Name, and turn from their sin . . . then hear Thou from Heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy . . . people" (2 Chron. 6:26, 27). "Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psa. 80:3). "Turn ye unto Me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 1:3). In every instance here the word *turn* is the Hebrew *shuwb*, meaning *to turn back*, and rendered *repent* elsewhere, as in Ezekiel 14:6: "Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations." The necessity of repentance is an Old Testament doctrine.

Every reader of the Gospels is familiar with the message of John the Baptist: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Our Lord Himself delivered the same message (Matt. 4:17), declaring also: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15); "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13: 3); and sending His disciples forth to preach that men should repent (Mark 6:12). It must be recognized, to be sure, that in the Old Testament as well as in the Synoptic Gospels the exhortations to repent, to turn about, are to Israel the nation, the professing people of God.

In The Acts, too, such a message is found (2:38; 3:19). Notice, however, that the word here was not only to the nation Israel, *but for all men everywhere* (17:30; 26:20).

This was Paul's message to the Gentiles at Athens; it was Peter's message to the believers of the dispersion, that the Lord "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Observe, too, that when Peter rehearsed to the apostles and brethren in Judaea his experience at Joppa and the ministry to Cornelius at Caesarea, the Judaeans believers "held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

We are well aware of the fact that in the Gospel of John, perhaps the pre-eminent Gospel book of the Bible, the words *repent* and *repentance* do not appear. Nor is repentance the message of Romans, seemingly—that great doctrinal epistle on the subject of redemption and righteousness. Yet surely John's Gospel does not contradict the Synoptics. Nor are the messages of Matthew, Mark, and Luke exclusively for Israel. When the rich young ruler came to our Lord asking what he should do to inherit eternal life, he was an individual who sought to know the way of salvation. The Lord Jesus did not say to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"—although certainly that would have been true. But He said: "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come and follow Me" (Matt. 19:21). It was a plea to the young man to change his attitude toward God. So the need of the new birth told to Nicodemus in John 3 implied the requirement of repentance, even though the major message was "to believe." Likewise in Romans the Apostle Paul shows that all have sinned, and points out that the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering of God lead men to repentance. In his defense before Agrippa the Apostle declared that the message of repentance was for Gentiles as well as for Jews, saying: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed first unto them of

Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, *and then to the Gentiles*, that they should repent and turn to God" (Acts 26:19, 20). Of course, *the great essential is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour from sin*. That faith will lead to repentance. But repentance is a step toward faith, too. We cannot conceive of a man putting his trust in Christ as his personal Saviour who does not repent of his sins. Yet it is that the longer and the more deeply one knows the Lord and abides in Him and in His Word, the more fully will he perceive the enormity of sin and repent of his own iniquities.

In our Lord's final commission to His disciples, He said: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48). Our salvation is wholly by grace (God's unmerited favor toward us) through faith; it has been accomplished for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely, this should be the burden of all Gospel preaching. Yet repentance toward God needs to be stressed more than it is today, perhaps, if we would have solid results.* Remember, however, that repentance is not conversion (*cf.* Acts 3:19). It is a change of mind and attitude toward sin and toward God related to conversion, for it is an acknowledgment of sin and of guilt. It is very closely allied to faith, as admission of sickness is akin to the acknowledgment of the need of a physician. Repentance is said to

*We are not speaking of an emotionalism, the old-time "mourners' bench" idea, with the thought that one must repent and mourn for a stated time to be made ready for salvation. No! We refer to true repentance, in the Biblical sense of the word. In fact, the word itself need never be mentioned, and still the doctrine will hold—for to make men see, by the Word and through the Spirit, their sinfulness and to draw them to the place of faith in Christ is to cause them to repent.

be directed toward God, while faith is toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

Is it, then, a meritorious act on the part of the sinner, to repent? If this be so, then God's grace is not enough to save, but it must be His grace plus some work of man. The Word of God does not leave us to grope for the answer, however, for it is "the goodness of God [that] leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). No man repents until the Holy Spirit acts upon his heart toward repentance through the truth. All is of God; none is of self.

"Now [God] commandeth all men every where to repent," for "joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Acts 17:30; Luke 15:7).

2. Faith

The Biblical definition of the word *faith* is found in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It might be put this way: "Faith is the guarantee of things hoped for, the convincing proof of things not seen." In other words, it is belief in and reliance upon God's revelation. Suppose we illustrate. In 1 John 5:10, 11, we read: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." The testimony of God is that he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. Faith is to place reliance upon God's witness and to believe in His Son. To believe God's revelation is to acknowledge that God is true. To reject it, is to make Him a liar. The former is faith; the latter, unbelief.

The English word *faith* is translated from the Greek *pistis* and signifies, almost invariably, *trust*. It is, sometimes however, employed with the signification of *fidelity*, as, for

example, "the faith of God" (Rom. 3:3), which alludes, quite obviously, to God's faithfulness rather than to His belief. But it is in the sense most generally suggested in the New Testament that we shall discuss what faith is, and how we are affected by it.

It is well for us to understand that there are two other words that denote similar reliance upon or trust in God, namely, *belief* and *reception*. The verb form of these nouns is found in our Bibles: *to believe* and *to receive*. The former occurs the more frequently, as in John 3:16, where it assuredly signifies *trust*. A classic example of the latter is in John 1:12: "But as many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." There again, the meaning is clearly that of *trusting*.

Faith, the saving faith under discussion, is associated closely in time, and is nearly coincident with, repentance. He who recognizes by divine grace his guilt and need of salvation is at the very place of exercising faith in the provision of that grace, and vice versa. It is through faith in God, faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice, that a man is saved, regenerated. And like repentance, faith is not an act of merit upon the part of him who evinces it, but it is a divinely implanted conviction. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This was Peter's experience, who, after he made his great confession of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, was told by Him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. 16:17).

As to the order of faith and regeneration, it is clear that while the two occur concurrently, as it were, yet the Spirit is received, that is, regeneration is effected, "by the hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2). Surely regeneration does not come

before faith. Granted that the natural man cannot himself discern his true condition and need Godward, except as the Spirit of God convicts and woos him—but He convicts and woos him *unto* salvation, which is by grace through faith.

Faith, then, is trust in God, reliance upon Him, reception of the truth on the ground of the authority of God. It is more than assent to truth; it is reliance upon that truth. It is more than mental acquiescence to a fact; it is reception of that fact in a very personal way. There are many who recognize and concede that Christ is the Son of God and that He died for their sins, who do not have faith in Him because they do not trust Him as their Saviour; they do not rest all their hope for time and eternity in Him.

Is it faith that saves us? No! We are saved by grace *through* faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). Faith is simply the channel through which God's grace to us is received. It is the hand that reaches out and receives the gift of His love. Thus, it is not a matter of how great or how small our faith may be, but in what or whom our faith rests. If it be in self, we are lost. If it be in ritual, or the sacrifices of the Law, or church membership, or ecclesiastical position, or coming forward in a Gospel meeting, or faith itself, we are undone. Our faith must be in God and directed toward the atoning sacrifice for sin of the Lord Jesus Christ, or it is of no value. Our trust must be in Him; it is in Him and His work for us that we must believe (John 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; etc., etc.). Only He can save (Acts 4:12), and that salvation was wrought by the shedding of His blood on Calvary's Cross.

But faith does not end with trust in Christ for our souls' salvation. Faith continues. Faith grows (*cf.* 2 Thess. 1:3). It may be weak at first; it should become stronger as we know God and His Word better, and as we experience His faithfulness to us in our Christian living. We need to trust Him to keep us, to strengthen us, to enable us, to sustain us.

We need to learn more and more to rest in Him for every circumstance—for the hour of trial, and for the day of gladness; for the daily provision, and for the sharing with others as He prospers us; for the common tasks and the great tasks; for spiritual growth, and for spiritual witness. We have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless we live: yet not we, but Christ liveth in us—and the life that we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20). Yes, faith continues. Yet at best our faith, even though it may grow, is weak, so that we need to cry with that distraught father of long ago: “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

“Faith is the guarantee of things hoped for, the convincing proof of things not seen.” To a doubting disciple our Lord said: “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). And how happy we are! For though we have not seen our Lord and Saviour in the flesh “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). And some day that faith will be sight. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” O Lord, hasten that day!

CHAPTER XVI

REGENERATION

Regeneration is an act of God which human reason cannot fully comprehend, but which He produces within the man of faith. It is a miracle wholly wrought by God and not by man. Man is the recipient; he is neither the instigator nor the agent, and cannot be.

We use the word *regeneration* rather than *salvation*. For *salvation* is a broader term which may be said to represent the whole scope of divine work in man's redemption and includes the forgiveness of the sins of the past (Rom. 1:16), the power over sin in this earthly life (Rom. 6:14), and salvation unto complete conformity to Christ in the future (Rom. 8:29). *Regeneration*, as we understand the word and shall make use of it here, is a more limited term which has to do primarily with that act of God whereby He bestows new life. It is the new birth, wrought by divine power. It is the implantation of a new nature, the divine nature, within the heart of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and his Saviour from sin.

Our consideration of the subject of regeneration falls into three divisions.

1. What Regeneration Is

Before we seek to define exactly what regeneration is, we must be clear in our minds in regard to three misconceptions concerning the subject. The first of these errors is that regeneration is an act which is needed only by some, and not by all. The second is that regeneration is the divine remoulding or improvement by gradual degrees of the nature with which we are born. The third fallacy is that regeneration is the act of reformation on the part of the individual. But there are flaws in this kind of reasoning.

Several years ago we read a treatise on regeneration by a well-known economist who has gained popular hearing as a "religious man." He rightly defined regeneration as the new birth, but then went on to explain his position. There are some, said he, who were not "born right" the first time. These, the drunkards, the thieves, the profligates, the immoral men and women, need to be born again. But others, he continued, who *were* "born right" the first time, simply need to go on being good! Nothing could be farther from the teaching of the Scriptures.

"There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned" (Rom. 3:10, 23; cf. also Gen. 6:5; Psa. 14:2, 3; 51:5; Isa. 1:5, 6; 40:6; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:17, 20; Gal. 3:22, etc.). It was not to a drunkard, or thief, or profligate, or immoral man that the Lord Jesus said: "Ye must be born again," but to a religious and moral man, a ruler of the Jews, a man who sought Him out for consultation because he believed that Jesus was come from God (John 3:1ff). Since every man or woman born into this world by natural process has been born with a nature inherited from Adam, and since all have sinned, regeneration is needed by all, and not by a few "unfortunates" only.

Neither is regeneration the divine remoulding or improvement of the nature with which we are born. To Nicodemus our Lord declared: "Ye must be born again [or anew]." It was not a making over of the old which He declared must be done, but the reception of something entirely new. "Ye must be born *anew*."

It is not God's way to remake the old. His way is to create new. But even if this were not so, there is no Scripture to indicate a remoulding process, but all declares a new work entirely. Why? Because there is nothing in us, in the flesh, which in itself can be made worthy of God's holy approval. "In me," says the Apostle Paul, "(that is, in my flesh,)"

dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6), and it can never be anything else but flesh. Were it possible for a man to enter again into his mother's womb, not once, but even a thousand times, and pass again through the natural process of birth, in every instance it would be true that the result would be birth in the flesh, and thus, in sin. And the flesh is presented in God's Word as that which those who are Christ's have crucified, and whose members are to be mortified or killed (Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5). To the flesh death is reckoned, not life. No, regeneration is not the improvement of the old nature, for man is completely ruined in sin. Something new must be wrought if we are to live unto God.

Nor is regeneration the act of reformation on the part of the individual. If the old nature is such that God cannot improve it to make it fit for His holy presence, what presumption to contend that man himself can do so! It is true that man may reform, that is, change his habits and even improve them. But at his best he is utterly bankrupt spiritually, that is, in God's reckoning; as it is written: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). Even a so-called "good man" is as an unclean thing in God's sight, and there is no way out for him but God's way—the substitutionary, vicarious sacrifice of the sinless Son of God, and faith in His Name.

Regeneration is, then, a new birth, the impartation of a new life, wrought in the believer by divine power through a supernatural act, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). It does not consist of anything that is old, improved, or remade. The old nature remains exactly as it was in every respect, capable of every sin that has ever emanated from the heart of man. The new nature is spiritual and distinct from the old; it is God-implanted, divine life, the life of Christ Himself (Gal. 2:20).

2. How Regeneration Is Imparted

The new life is communicated to the believer in Christ entirely by God's act. Man has no part in the miracle of regeneration and cannot have. As an illustration, let us make use of the record of the miracle of new physical life given to one who had died and whose body was in the grave, Lazarus. His resurrection was due in no sense to his own power. He was dead, his body already decaying. It was by the word of the Lord: "Lazarus, come forth!"—by the power of God that the dead man was brought to life. So it is in the spiritual realm. God's almighty power communicates new life to those who are spiritually dead. It is true, this life is given only to those who believe in the Son of God, but such faith, *apart from the power wrought of God*, does not impart eternal life. God, the omnipotent One, gives life.

Recalling again the conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus, we remember the Saviour's words: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The new birth (which is not natural birth in that a man does not undergo a second time the process of nature) is imparted by "water and the Spirit."

There is considerable misconception concerning the word *water* in relation to the new birth, for it has been widely taught that this refers to water-baptism. But this is not so. No one ever received new life by water-baptism. No such teaching can be found in the Bible. *Baptism is a figure of death, not of life*. For example, we read in Romans 6:3, 4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His *death*? Therefore we are *buried* with Him by baptism into *death*." There is no hint of life by baptism in this passage or elsewhere in the Scriptures. Further, the word *water* in John's Gospel as elsewhere in the

New Testament, symbolizes the Word of God. "Whosoever drinketh of the *water* that I shall give him shall never thirst," our Lord declared to the woman of Samaria (John 4:14). Certainly he was not referring to baptism, but to the Word of God. Paul employs the same figure to denote the Word of God in Ephesians 5:26: "That He might sanctify it [the Church] and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." And lest we should be in doubt, the Holy Spirit clarifies it all for us when through Peter He declares the means of the new birth: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

Four passages in the Fourth Gospel will suffice to show how God's Word operates in imparting new life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His Name" (John 20:31). God, by His Holy Spirit and in His Word, has given the record concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By believing that Word, by trusting in the living Word, we are made partakers of the divine nature. But the work and the power are God's and not ours: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*" (John 1:11-13).

Some may object, saying: "But I do not understand all this. I still do not see how the Word of God can impart new life." We are not called upon to understand, but to believe.

God has not revealed the metaphysical nature of regeneration, but simply that without it one can neither enter nor see the Kingdom of God, and that He in His power communicates new life to those who will believe His Word and receive it. To the skeptic or infidel who will not believe because he does not understand or denies the supernatural the Scripture gives answer: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

To be born of water and the Spirit is to be born anew through the Word of God as it is impressed upon our consciences and hearts by the agency of the Holy Spirit, working in almighty power upon and within us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).

3. The Effects of Regeneration

God regenerates; man is regenerated. That regeneration, as we have seen, is a new birth, whereby new life is communicated to the recipient, divine life, Christ Himself living in the heart by the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20). He who has been born again is thus said to be a new creature or creation (2 Cor. 5:17). "Old things [with him] are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Things are different now. That which he once hated he now loves, that is, that which pertains to God and to His glory and program; that which he once loved he now hates, that is, the things that are ungodly and inimical to God and relationship to Him.

Further, when one is born again he is born into the family of God; he becomes immediately a child of God and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God. . . . Now are we the sons [children] of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:1, 2). "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ . . ." (Rom. 8:16, 17) .

These things are immediately true of the one regenerated. It is not a matter of feeling, but of fact—for God's Word says so. We know it to be true because we believe His Word, and rest in it. We do not look within, for feeling, but without, at Christ—and trusting Him and His Word, receive life.

Now it is quite true that we do not always live as if these great truths were real. Our position, by God's grace and through faith, is that we are united with Christ, born anew by the Word and the Spirit, new creations in Christ, possessors of divine life. God the Father looks at us through His Son, whom He made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). But often we fail Him, often we sin. Yet the relationship is not broken. The new life which we possess in Christ is *eternal* life, *everlasting* life; and that means that it has no end. Relationship is not broken, for we are the children of God and His heirs. But when sin enters the life, the fellowship with the Father is broken, until that sin is confessed. And there are times when the Father chastens His children, in order that they may see their failures, and exercised by the chastening, may come back into fellowship with Him through repentance and confession, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord (*cf.* Heb. 12:6-12).

And more than this is involved in the new birth, for the new creation in Christ is immediately justified before a holy God, sanctified unto Him, and made secure in Him (Rom. 3:24; 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:25; 1:14, 15; 4:30). He need no longer be a slave to sin but may have dominion over it in Christ and by His life in the glory at the Father's right hand (Rom. 6:14; 5:10). The Christian may sin, but he is never happy in sin. Why? Because he has been born again, and Christ, in whom there is no sin, dwells in his heart by faith.

And so it evolves that while it is not by works of righteousness that we have done that we have been saved, but according to the mercy of God, yet having been regenerated, our one desire is, or ought to be, to please God. Our whole viewpoint is changed. The things which are spiritual, which at one time were unwelcome to our beings, are now the vital things. The things of the world that we, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, reveled in, now that we have new life, are without appeal to us, to the new man in Christ Jesus. "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Nor must we ever forget that the power of God to give us new life was wrought out by the death for sin of His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His resurrection from among the dead. We are accepted before God in Him, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

CHAPTER XVII

JUSTIFICATION

The justification of a sinner is a divine act which confounds human wisdom and power. The very words contradict one another, for how can a *sinner* be *justified*? *To justify* is to *declare or pronounce just or righteous*, that is, *not guilty*. But according to divine law and revelation all are guilty of sin, and its penalty is death (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Even if the guilty sinner can be forgiven his sin or pardoned from its penalty, how can he be justified, declared not guilty? That he can be is the clear teaching of Scripture which states that “all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:39), and that this justification is the free gift of God’s grace “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

Observe that it is the sinner who is said to be justified, and not the righteous man. If any man were wholly righteous, he would not need to be justified before God—in fact, the very words *righteous* (*dikaïos*, Gr.) and *just* (from the verb, *dikaioo*) come from the same root. But “as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10)—therefore, it cannot be the righteous whom God justifies, but sinners. And thus it is declared that God “justifieth the *ungodly*” (Rom. 4:5). We shall see, however, that those whom God justifies are sinners who believe Him.

Our consideration of the subject of justification falls into four divisions.

1. The Fact and Source of Justification

The fact of the sinner’s justification is set forth in God’s Holy Word. Three passages to this effect have already been cited (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24; and Rom. 4:5). Three other quotations from the Epistle to the Romans, perhaps the most

profound document ever penned, will establish the fact of God's justification of the sinner: "Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it [his faith unto righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (4:23-25); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1); and "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (5:8, 9).

The fact of the sinner's justification before God is established, for God has declared it. But how does it become effectual or real? By faith (Rom. 5:1). When by faith the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, thus receiving the free gift of God's grace, he is justified. He who was lost in trespasses and sins *has been* justified through faith. While it is the ungodly whom God justifies, that justification can only apply when the sinner has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ through faith. The believer in Christ, on the other hand, no longer needs to be justified, for he is *now already* justified. In Christ he has been made the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Man cannot justify himself. He is a sinner by nature and he has sinned by act in thought, word, and deed. There is no way by which he can pronounce himself righteous before God, as not guilty. Sin is written in his heart in bold letters. There is only one source of justification before God, and that is God Himself. So we find it written, again in the Epistle to the Romans: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (8:33). He does it

for undeserving men and women purely by His grace, His unmerited favor. But He justifies them righteously and justly, else He would not be God. How?—this we shall see in due course and it will confirm our opening remark, that “the justification of a sinner is a divine act which confounds human wisdom and power.”

2. The Nature of Justification

That *justification*, as used in the Scriptures, has to do with the declaration or pronouncement of righteousness or lack of guilt is amply borne out by its usage, of which we shall cite only a few examples. “If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked” (Deut. 25:1). “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked” (Exod. 23:7). “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 17:15). Usage and context show clearly that *to justify* is *to pronounce guiltless*.

In the case of the sinner’s standing before God this is not as simple as it first appears. For *to forgive* or *to pardon* is not synonymous with *to justify*. For example, a man may steal from his neighbor. He is apprehended with the stolen goods and may be condemned to prison sentence. His neighbor may forgive him, yet assuredly the man is not guiltless just because he has been forgiven. He is still a thief. Or another man may be committed to jail for some crime. In due course the governor of the state pardons him, and releases him. Yet he is not guiltless, for he has committed the offense. He only is justified who is tried for a misdemeanor and found *not guilty*. If, after his trial, someone would say to him: “I am glad to hear that you were forgiven. It is grand that you have been pardoned”—he

would have perfect right to reply: "I have neither been forgiven nor pardoned. I have been justified, declared righteous by the court."

With the sinner, however, God not only forgives, but justifies. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he who was lost in sin but has been saved by grace through faith, is not only forgiven of his sins, but he stands before a holy God *justified*. He is without guilt in God's sight. As someone has put it: "I am justified and it's just-as-if-I'd never sinned." Glorious truth! Every Christian, every one who has put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour from sin, has this standing: *in Christ he is guiltless before God*. He is cleared of every charge. Nothing of sin stands written against him. He is justified.

Justification is not a matter of feeling, but of fact. God has wrought out our justification in Christ, and through faith in Him it becomes effectual for us. It is a forensic act on the part of God who, as the Judge, declares His justice to be satisfied, and is "the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). We do not *feel* justified; we *are* justified in Christ.

Neither does justification produce a subjective or progressive change in him who is justified. Such a change—the gift of new life, the passing away of old things and the desire for holy living—is imparted at regeneration and in practical sanctification. Justification affects simply our standing Godward. It is positive righteousness before God, if we may say so, in contrast to negative righteousness obtained through His forgiveness. Justification is our title to eternal life. Pardon for sin removes its penalty—death; justification gives its reward—life.

Justification brings with it peace, peace with God. We can have the peace of God because we know that we have peace *with* God, being justified by faith. *There* comes the

feeling—the peace of God that passes all understanding and garrisons our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. The Means of Justification

There are five conditions or means in the New Testament by which we are said to be justified, and a sixth is implied. It is written that we are justified “*freely by His grace*” (Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7); “*by faith*” (Rom. 5:1); “*by His blood*” (Rom. 5:9); *by His resurrection* (Rom. 4:25); and “*by works*” (James 2:24). It is shown also that righteousness is *imputed* to him who believes God (Rom. 4:22-24). Since all these statements are the revelation of God, suppose we examine them.

Because it appears to be so contradictory to the other citations, we look first at James 2:24: “Ye see then that *by works* a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Indeed it is counter to the others, which teach that justification is by grace, by faith, by the blood of Christ, and by His resurrection. Yet God’s Word cannot refute itself, surely. Nor does it.

This verse stands alone to magnify works above faith. In addition to the other conditions or means of justification just alluded to, we find still further Scriptures agreeing with them and antithetical to the verse in James’ Epistle, namely: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law” (Rom. 3:28); “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5); “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . . for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16); and, “Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). As

salvation is wholly by grace through faith and not by works (Eph. 2:8, 9), so with justification, which is embraced in our salvation.

The one seeming exception to this doctrine, as found in James 2:24, is not an exception at all. James writes to state, as the context will show upon careful examination: (1) that faith that is genuine will issue in works, without which it is dead (*cf.* Eph. 2:10). There is that which is called "faith," which consists merely of mental assent to certain dogmas. It is not a living faith. The seal of faith that is real is works, as Abraham, who believed God, acted in obedience and offered his only begotten son, Isaac. And (2) James speaks of justification before men. Justification before God is by grace through faith. But men cannot see into the heart as God does. How will our fellow-men know that we are justified? How will they know that our faith is real? By our works. Thus before them we are justified by works, and not by faith only.

It is *by grace* that we are justified (Rom. 3:24) exactly as it is by grace that we are saved—for when we are saved we are justified. Grace is God's free gift. It involves absolutely no merit upon our part, but all is of God; it is His unmerited favor. By that grace, that favor, we who deserve nothing but to be pronounced guilty and condemned are saved and justified. That justification is transmitted to us *by* (or *through*) *faith* (Rom. 5:1). Faith is not meritorious. To have faith is to believe. It is the hand that reaches out and receives God's free gift. Without faith on our part we do not receive what He has provided. Believing God, His gift is ours. Faith is to trust God, and even this faith comes through Him, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). *Grace* is God's method of justification; *faith* is the condition of man's justification.

The blood of Christ is said to be the means of our justifi-

cation (Rom. 5:9). Even in His grace God did not and could not justify us unrighteously, that is, without justice. To be consistent with His holiness He had to require that sin's penalty should be paid. So, in grace, God Himself, in the person of His Son and our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, paid that penalty. Christ in "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). On the Cross of Calvary God made Him . . . who knew no sin, to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus God could forgive and pardon us in justice, since sin's penalty was met by His sinless and righteous Son. We are justified "by His blood," the blood of His Cross.

To Him our sin was *imputed* at Calvary, and likewise the righteousness of God was imputed to us (Rom. 4:24). For *to impute* is *to ascribe to, to reckon to, to lay to one's account*, that which is imputed. When the blessed Son of God hung on the Cross, our sin was ascribed or reckoned to Him—He was made sin for us; while there was laid to our account the righteousness of God in Him. When righteousness (or justification) is said to be imputed to us, then, it is ours by virtue of Christ and what He has done in our behalf.

Finally, it is written that Christ "was *raised again* for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). If our justification is dependent upon His shed blood, how can it be said that His resurrection is its means? It is contingent upon both. Had He not died, He could not have been raised again; had He not been raised, we should not know that His death satisfied God's holiness.

Christ "was delivered for our offences," we are told in the first clause of our verse. His death was for sin. It was death to the sinner's old self likewise, which has been reckoned as crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20). Nothing of self, nothing of

the old man, is worthy of justification; in fact, it cannot be justified, for it merits only condemnation. Thus we who are Christians have been baptized into Christ's death. *But*, He "was raised again for our justification." "Like as Christ was raised up from [among] the dead . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). In His resurrection we, too, have been raised through faith (Col. 2:12) to newness of life. That new self, the new life in Christ, cannot be condemned any more than the old life can be justified. But the new life must be justified, for it is Christ living in us (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 3:4). As His death was the means of our justification, so also His resurrection.

We are justified, then, by God's grace through faith. It was wrought out by imputation, by means of the blood of Christ shed for sinners, and by His resurrection. In His wisdom and power God has been able to make believing sinners righteous in their standing before Him. Not only are our sins forgiven and forgotten, but there is no guilt attached to us. It is just as if we had never sinned. And all is in Christ.

4. The Seal of Justification

That Christ "was raised again for our justification" serves to assure us that it is true that we are justified. It is the seal of our righteous standing before God. Had He not been raised, how would we know that His death satisfied the righteous and holy demands of God? "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). But He was raised. God did it, thus declaring Him "to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from [among] the dead" (Rom. 1:4). The death of the Lord Jesus Christ met God's every demand for sin and for sinners, and in His resurrection we have been made alive and just in His Holy Presence.

“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness [justification], and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

CHAPTER XVIII

SANCTIFICATION

There is scarcely any teaching of the New Testament, perhaps, that has been so misunderstood and misconstrued as the doctrine of sanctification. This has been due in great measure to misapprehension of the meaning of the word *sanctify* in its various forms as it is used in the Bible, to misapplication of a few "proof texts" which have been taken out of their context, and to arriving at a theory from experience rather than accepting the truth as it is written in the Word of God.

Three erroneous tenets of Christianity result. (a) There is the teaching that is so prevalent today as to a second work of grace, or a "second blessing." Those who hold this view maintain that a man is justified when he puts his trust in Christ as Saviour, but that some place along the way of his Christian experience a second work of God's grace takes place within him, whereby, through full yieldedness to God, he becomes sanctified. Those who are merely justified but not yet sanctified, they teach, by sinning lose their justification and must be justified all over again if they are to be saved. (b) Some who hold the position just alluded to go further and declare that he who is fully sanctified by this so-called "second blessing" reaches the place where he is completely delivered from inbred, indwelling sin, so that there is no tendency within him toward sin. In other words, the old nature is said to be eradicated. And (c) there are still others who take a different position: that sanctification has to do with the improvement of the old nature, and that by a gradual process of submissiveness to God the flesh can be "made over," as it were, until it becomes wholly sanctified.

That all three of these theories have no basis of fact in the Bible but are absolutely unscriptural we shall see as we examine the subject of sanctification in three sections.

1. Sanctification Defined Etymologically and Biblically

There are various English words, that is, *sanctify* and its several forms, as *sanctification*; *holy* and *holiness*; and *saint*; which come from identical root words in the Hebrew and Greek. In the former, the root is *kodesh*, and in the latter the verb is *hagiazoo*, from the root, *hagios*. For example, the Hebrew *kodesh* is rendered *sanctified* in Genesis 2:3: "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it," while it is translated *holy* in Exodus 20:8: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." This is strikingly illustrated in Leviticus 21:8: "Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the Lord, which sanctify you, am holy." Four words in this verse come from the same Hebrew root: *sanctify*, used twice, from *kodesh*; and *holy*, used twice, from *kodowsh*. Likewise in the New Testament, we see the English words *sanctification* in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, *holiness* in Hebrews 12:10, and *saints* in Ephesians 1:1, all coming from the one Greek root, *hagios*.

While the two words, the one in the Hebrew and the other in the Greek, may be said to have sundry kindred meanings, as *to be pure*, *holy*, *consecrated*, *separated*, *set apart*, etc., according to context, it is agreed among Bible scholars that the primary meaning is *set apart*. We have before us three Greek lexicons, two of which are New Testament dictionaries, and the other a general one. Here is the summary of their definitions of *hagios* and *hagiazoo*. *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Souter: *to make or treat as set apart, to sanctify, to hallow*. *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Bagster: *to separate, consecrate, purify, sanctify*; in LXX, *to regard or*

reverence as holy. The general *Greek-English Lexicon*, Liddell & Scott: *devoted (or consecrated) to gods*; in a good sense, *sacred or holy*; in a bad sense, *accursed or execrable*.

That which is sanctified or made holy in the Biblical sense is that which is set apart. As a matter of fact, as intimated from the last definition given, something may be sanctified or set apart for an unholy or evil purpose. And although it is rare, we have an example of this in the Bible: "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst [referring to sinful pagan practices], eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:17). Clearly the use of the word here does not refer to practical holiness, as we generally think of the word, but of being set apart for a particular purpose, which, in this instance, is to evil.

The preponderance of Scriptures employing the words which we have been discussing, then, show that in their Biblical usage they have to do with that person or thing, or those persons or things, *set apart*. While most generally that setting apart is Godward, sometimes it is manward. Suppose we examine the Scriptures to ascertain who may be the agent of sanctification, and who or what may be its object.

God is not the only agent of sanctification, for so, also, is man. Further, when it is God who sanctifies, it is not only man that He sets apart, but He is said to sanctify times, places, and things as well. A few Scripture references will establish these facts.

Each Person of the Divine Trinity is an agent of sanctification. God the Father sanctifies (John 10:36; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5:23). God the Son sanctifies (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 13:12). God the Spirit sanctifies (Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13). In the case of persons, it is not only regenerated people of this age whom God sanctifies, but whom He wills. He, God the

Father, sanctified the Son (John 10:36). He, God the Son, sanctified Himself (John 17:19). God is said also to have sanctified the nation Israel (Exod. 31:13), and to have sanctified the Aaronic priesthood (Exod. 29:44). He sanctifies the unbelieving husband or wife *in* (rather than *by*) the believing wife or husband (1 Cor. 7:14). And God sanctifies carnal as well as spiritual Christians (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; *cf.* 3:1-3). Further, it is written that God sanctifies times, places, and things. He sanctified the sabbath day (Gen. 2:2, 3). He sanctified the tabernacle of the congregation (Exod. 29:44). He sanctified also the furnishings of the tabernacle—the altar and the laver (Exod. 40:10, 11). The Lord told Moses, too, that Mt. Sinai was sanctified (Exod. 19:23).

As for man, he also is able to sanctify. Man can sanctify God (1 Peter 3:15). One man can sanctify another (Exod. 13:2; 19:10). And he can sanctify himself (Exod. 19:22; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Peter 1:16). Man may sanctify inanimate objects—his house or his field (Lev. 27:14, 16).

Finally, inanimate things are said to sanctify other inanimate things (Matt. 23:17, 19).

It is therefore evident, both etymologically and from Biblical usage, that sanctification has to do with that which is sanctified being set apart. Certainly it cannot mean, as it is erroneously taught, a “second blessing” through yieldedness, the eradication of the old nature and inbred sin, or reformation of the old nature into something which is “wholly sanctified.” For man cannot do any such thing for another man or for himself, and God will not. Neither can a mountain, nor an altar, nor a building be freed from something which it does not possess—the old nature and inbred sin. To be sanctified in the Scripture is to be set apart, generally (though not always) by God to Himself for His own divine purpose. That which is set apart is usually cleansed or purified, but this is not always so. That which is set apart is for the most

part able to be a partaker of practical holiness, but this is not always so, either.

The whole teaching of the Bible regarding sanctification and holiness will be clarified through an understanding of the meaning of the words. He who does comprehend them, he who has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, will, of course, seek to live holily, sanctified in a practical way unto God, separated from all that is unholy and unclean, from all that is of the world, the flesh, and the devil, following holiness (or sanctification) "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

2. Positional Sanctification

It is the frequent assertion of the New Testament that the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ *is already sanctified*. Those who composed the Church at Rome were "called saints" (Rom. 1:7—the words *to be* should not be in the English text as they do not appear in the Greek). To the Church of God at Corinth the Apostle writes: "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). Similar comments are to be found in respect to the Ephesian Christians (1:1), the Philippians (1:1), and the Colossians (1:2), while of the Thessalonians it is said: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). This sanctification is not something that will take place at some future and indefinite date in the experience of some, but it is something that has already taken place on behalf of those to whom it applies, that is, Christians, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Of the Corinthians, not some of them but all, Paul says: ". . . ye are washed, . . . ye *are* sanctified, . . . ye are justified" (1 Cor. 6:11). While the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it this way: "By the which

will [the will of God] we *are* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10).

Those who suggest that there are two steps in the Christian life—the first, justification; and the second, sanctification—will point to such Bible verses as 2 Corinthians 1:15: "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit" (the last two words being rendered "second blessing" in the margins of some editions of the Bible); and Acts 19:2: "He [Paul] said unto them [disciples at Ephesus], Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." But the right understanding of any Bible doctrine depends, not upon one isolated verse, but upon a consideration of the context in which it appears and of all the Scriptures which bear on the theme. Both of the verses are clarified by comparing them with other Scriptures and examining the context closely.

In the matter of the Ephesian disciples, the question Paul asked them is made clearer by the use of the correct word *when* instead of *since*. Had they received the gift of the Spirit *when* they believed? This was the test as to whether or not they were Christians at all, for Romans 8:9 tells us: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." These disciples were John's disciples, not Christ's. They had been baptized "unto John's baptism," baptism unto repentance—but of redemption through the precious blood of Christ they knew nothing. All who are familiar with the Word of God know that the Christians of Corinth were utterly carnal, as declared in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (3:1-3). Did the Corinthians, then, have to wait until they reached a certain state of yieldedness before they should receive the Holy Spirit? No! They already had received the Spirit of God (2:12), they were already indwelt by the Holy Spirit, whose temple they were (3:16).

And in this same Epistle the question of that "second benefit" which the Apostle Paul sought to bring them is revealed not to be the so-called "second blessing" of sanctification, for it is written, as already noted, that they "*are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" (1:2), and that these carnal Christians "*are washed . . . are sanctified . . . are justified*" (6:11). How wonderfully wise and careful the Spirit of God is to refute error! By the very order of this last-cited verse, the placing of *sanctified* before *justified*, He destroys the doctrine that sanctification must follow justification. Justification and sanctification are consequent with regeneration. All are made ours as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ the moment we believe; all are in Him. The "second benefit" to which the Apostle was referring in 2 Corinthians 1:15 was not a "second work of grace" in their hearts, related to redemption and sanctification, but simply a benefit or blessing through his ministry. His first visit to them had resulted in the salvation of souls and spiritual increase. So he desired to visit them a second time, that there might be another blessing, a second benefit to them.

How is this sanctification, this setting apart unto God, imparted to the Christian? As we have just suggested, sanctification is ours *in Christ*, that is, by our union with Him (1 Cor. 1:2, 30). Sanctification is *by the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). It is *by the blood of Christ* (Heb. 9:13, 14; 13:12; cf. 10:10). It is *by the Word of God* (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 1 Tim. 4:5). It is *by faith* (Acts 26:18). It is *by choice* (2 Tim. 2:21, 22; Heb. 12:14).

Sanctification is ours as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ because of our union with Him. "But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). We "*are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" (1 Cor. 1:2). All these things—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and re-

demption—are ours in Christ. How? Through faith. “By grace are ye saved *through faith*” (Eph. 2:8). The Apostle Paul was commissioned by the Lord Jesus to go to the Gentiles, as our Lord said: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified *by faith* that is in Me” (Acts 26:18). We are no more sanctified in our standing before God by works than we are saved by works, or justified by works. It is all through faith. Nor is it to be earned, but is a position before God which is immediate upon regeneration, complete, and independent of man. We cannot procure by anything that we do either wisdom or righteousness or sanctification or redemption. Christ has been made unto the believer all these things, whose fulness is God’s fulness, and our fulness is in Him. The moment a sinner believes in Christ he becomes united to Him, made one with Him, and is accepted in Him. And in Him is sanctification, so that by God’s wondrous grace we are as sanctified in our standing, or position, before Him as is His Son, our Lord and Saviour.

Sanctification is said also to be by the Holy Spirit. We have already quoted 1 Corinthians 6:11 several times. The washing, the sanctification, and the justification in the Name of the Lord Jesus are referred to there as “*by the Spirit of our God.*” To the Thessalonians Paul writes: “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit* and belief of the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). And Peter declares of the sojourners of the dispersion that they are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). Not only does sanctification not

follow justification at some indefinite and eagerly-to-be-sought time, but it appears, in one sense, to precede regeneration. How can this be? It could not be if positional sanctification had to do with practical holiness. But understanding the true meaning of the word, *to be set apart* or *separated*, we see that the sinner who hears and believes the truth unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ has already had his heart prepared by the Holy Spirit. Thus he is set apart by the Spirit to “the belief of the truth” and “unto obedience” to it as revealed in the Word and in Christ.

Sanctification is by the body of Christ, that is, it is by His blood. In Hebrews 10:10 we are told that “we are sanctified through the offering of *the body of Jesus Christ* once for all.” That offering of His body was through the shedding of His blood when as the Lamb of God He was offered in sacrifice for sin on the Cross. This fact is alluded to in Hebrews 9:13, 14, and is stated in unmistakable terms in Hebrews 13:12: “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people *with His own blood*, suffered without the gate.” The believer in Christ has been set apart unto God through the atoning work of God the Son. Of course this is so. Redemption is through His precious blood, and regeneration, sanctification, and justification are all a part of that redemption. All that we are or have or hope for is dependent upon the blood of Christ shed at Calvary. Thus we are sanctified by His blood.

As to the relation of the Word to the believer’s sanctification, and also regarding the believer’s choice in this respect, we shall have something to say a little later.

Sanctification is not a matter of feeling, but of fact—as are, indeed, regeneration and justification. In Christ we are sanctified, wholly and completely. In Him we have all these things, and not one without the other. He is not made unto us wisdom and redemption unless also He is made unto us

righteousness and sanctification. It is either all, or none—and it is all. Nor does the Scripture put it this way: that Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *a measure of sanctification*, and redemption. Not at all. That which God does is complete and everlasting. “For by one offering He hath *perfected forever* them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). In Christ we are sanctified, set apart from all that is in the world, and of the flesh, and of the devil, and thus subject to judgment—set apart unto God in Christ, born anew, justified, and sanctified forever. This is our glorious position, by God’s grace.

3. Practical Sanctification

It must not be thought, however, that there is no place for personal holiness. To the contrary, believers in Christ have been chosen “in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him” (Eph. 1:4), and again, “it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). As we have learned, *to be holy* is *to be sanctified*, and it is sad indeed that so many who are sanctified as to their position do not exhibit more of it in their condition. We *are* sanctified, but too often we do not live as if this were so. Practical sanctification is not, to be sure, a state to be reached that we may earn salvation or receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both are ours in Christ. In fact, it is not possible to progress in the way of personal holiness apart from having been born again and possessing the indwelling Holy Spirit. For it is not the old nature which participates in personal sanctification, not the flesh; practical sanctification is the result of positional sanctification and is experienced progressively as we dethrone self and enthrone Christ, in whom we are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17).

Now the Scriptures tell us that sanctification is by the Word of God. Our Lord, in His great high-priestly prayer,

besought the Father for His own: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them *through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth*" (John 17:15-17). Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the Word*" (Eph. 5:25, 26). It is quite true that our regeneration in the first place, and thus our positional sanctification, was wrought, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). For "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). But the allusion of the two Scripture passages cited above, in John 17 and Ephesians 5, is to Christ's present loving work for the Church, His own. They are already sanctified, yet He prays the Father to sanctify them. Why? Not that they should be made ready for Heaven—indeed not! The moment a man is born again he is as ready for Heaven as he ever will be, for his wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption are in Christ Jesus. His glory is in the Lord, and not in himself, worthy only of judgment.

Day by day we need to apply the Word of God to our lives. It sanctifies us, sets us apart here in this earthly life and cleanses us—from the things that defile, from all that is not of God; it sets us apart to Him. It is "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." By giving heed to it our way is cleansed. How is this operative? It can only be so as we read and study the Word. It can hardly light the way for us if we do not make use of it. It will scarcely cleanse if we do not apply it. Like the Aaronic priests of old, who washed in the laver before approaching the altar, so we must wash ourselves daily in the water of the Word.

Then, we are told, that practical sanctification is by

choice, if we may use the term. In Hebrews it is written: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14), while Paul writes to Timothy: "If a man purge himself from these [vessels of dishonor], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work . . . Follow righteousness . . . with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:21, 22). The evidence that positional sanctification is ours will be the desire for, the following after, personal sanctification practically demonstrated. One cannot win the position by the practise. But one who has experienced salvation and sanctification through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will manifest it by purging himself from defilement and following after holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord." Thank God, He has provided the way: by His Spirit, to whom we must yield for His filling; and by His Word, with its purifying power.

To the Thessalonian Christians, already sanctified in their standing, Paul said: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). Here we have allusion to practical sanctification, earnestly to be followed after, that we might be holy and without blame before the Lord. To the Ephesians the Apostle declared, when speaking of Christ having given Himself for the Church that He might sanctify and cleanse it: "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (5:27). Here we have ultimate sanctification, when the Church of Christ will not only possess what it already has—perfect sanctification in their position before God; but because we shall be like the Lord when we see Him as He is (1 John 3:2), our personal holiness will be perfected also, and

we shall be presented faultless before the presence of His glory (Jude 24). What joy it should be for every child of God to follow after holiness for His Name's sake!

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy [*sanctified, set apart*], acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHRISTIAN'S TWO NATURES

Many a Christian has become disheartened and distraught, many a Christian's testimony has been stultified, because of ignorance of the doctrine of the dual nature in the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every Christian experiences the conflict between these two natures, but all do not recognize that conflict for what it is. Thus, it frequently occurs that some who have received Christ as their Saviour and have expected to go on experimentally in the newness of life which is their possession in Him, falling into sin (when they thought that they would sin no more), have begun to have doubts and have known despondency, and the testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ which gave early promise of brightness is often dimmed and even snuffed out entirely. A proper understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures as to the warfare between the old nature and the new, and concerning Christian experience, will eliminate such disillusion and discouragement, and will make for consistent Christian living by apprehension and appropriation of the fact that the Christian life is the life of Christ manifesting itself in the believer over and above the self-life.

The source of every doctrine of the Christian faith is, of course, the Bible, the Word of God. We turn to the Scriptures, then, to learn what they have to say regarding the believer's two natures. Our considerations will fall into three divisions.

1. The Christian's Two Natures Established and Defined

Nowhere in the Bible do we find the exact expressions, "the two natures," or "dual nature"; neither do we see the individual terms, "the old nature," and "the new nature." This does not detract, however, from their significance or

accuracy, and as we make use of these terms we shall see that they embrace several Scriptural expressions and implications.

First of all, suppose we cite some New Testament passages to establish the fact that the "Christian's Two Natures" is a Bible doctrine. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18). "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5, 6). "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). "That ye put off concerning the former conduct the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24). "Lie not one to another, seeing that

ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10). "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . ." (2 Peter 1:4).

By no means do these passages exhaust the references in the Bible to the subject before us. But they will suffice to show that the Scriptures do establish the fact that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have two natures, and to intimate certain things about them. First of all, we find the believer's natures called by various names. We see contrasting terms which speak of the flesh and of the Spirit, and of the old man and the new man. We read also, on the one hand, of the carnal mind and the natural man, and on the other, of new creation and the divine nature. Here are not a few terms which, in a general sense, come within the scope of our expressions: "the old nature," and "the new nature." In every instance they relate to the Christian, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and never to the unbeliever, who is dead and lost in trespasses and sins.

Now we must not confuse either the old nature or the new with "human nature." Human nature is that which every man or woman possesses. Adam had a human nature both before and after his fall, and had it still after his restoration. Ahab and Jezebel had human natures, and so did Judas Iscariot. Saul of Tarsus did not lose his human nature by becoming a Christian, the Apostle Paul. Our blessed Lord had a human nature. He was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man (Phil. 2:7, 8). This was His Humanity—but never, *never* did He have a sinful nature. He not only did not sin, but He knew *no sin*. While He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), He was essentially and absolutely holy.

Every person born on this earth receives by natural generation a human nature. As a part of that human nature, every man or woman born into the world by natural processes inherits from his first parents a fallen, sinful nature, the old nature; *all* are by nature natural men, and as such are carnally minded. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." And in the flesh there "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). We were born in sin. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The hopeless condition of the natural man—born in sin; subject to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; by nature the child of the devil and of wrath; and dead in trespasses and sins (Psa. 51:5; 1 John 2:16; John 8:44; Eph. 2:3, 1) needs no further demonstration. It has been discussed at length in previous chapters. The old man, the natural man, is all that a man is apart from Christ, and in him there is nothing good, there is no righteousness.

Only one group of men and women possess that which we term "the new nature"; they are those who have been born again, recipients of the divine nature, new creations in Christ, in Him raised unto newness of life (2 Peter 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4). Such a one is "the new man"; he has a new birth, a spiritual birth, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 3:3, 6; 1:12). He has a new nature; it is Christ Himself dwelling in the heart by the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:19). He has a new life, the life of Christ, and old things are passed away and all things have become new (Col. 3:4; 2 Cor. 5:17). Ample evidence for the doctrine of the new nature in believers has been cited to prove that it is Scriptural.

We know, then, that the old nature is that nature pos-

essed by the old man, by all who are born into this world of the flesh, that is, in the natural way. We have learned also that the new nature is that which is possessed by the new man, by all who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and have been regenerated, born again. But does the matter end here? The man who is out of Christ has the old nature, but does not possess the new. But is it true, as some claim, that it is possible for the Christian to possess *only* the new nature? Can the old nature be eradicated in this life? If so, then the Christian cannot sin—for since the new nature is the divine nature, it cannot commit sin. And if the old nature can *not* be eliminated in this life, how does it affect the child of God, the believer in Christ? With the Apostle Paul we inquire: "What saith the Scripture?"

2. The Conflict Between the Old and New Natures

Basing their argument on certain isolated Bible verses, but particularly on one passage in John's First Epistle, there are some who contend that the Christian cannot sin, but rather, by yieldedness reaches a state of sinlessness, of perfection, committing no sin. This is the passage: "Who-soever abideth in Him [Christ] sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:6-10).

This is very strong and clear language, and if the passage stood alone and there were nothing else in the Bible on the

subject, we would be obliged to conclude that unless we have reached a state of sinless perfection, we are lost. But there *are* other Scriptures to indicate a different view. First, by what right do we assume that those to whom the Apostle John was writing had reached any advanced state of Christianity, that they were any different from any cross section of believers in Christ? In this very letter John writes: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (1:8-10). Again, the Apostle takes into account a provision for us when we *do* sin: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And *if* any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (2:1, 2). Certainly there is nothing in these two citations to indicate that he who commits sin is not a Christian, or that an "advanced" Christian cannot sin. To the contrary, it is made clear that he who says he has not sinned as a Christian makes God a liar.

Further, the Scriptures declare that the old nature, the flesh, is not eradicated upon regeneration or at any other state in our earthly lives. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Here we see in the child of God, the Christian (for no man is indwelt by the Holy Spirit unless he is a Christian)—here, then, we see the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as the seat of conflict, between the old nature, self, and the new nature, the Holy Spirit. These are contrary one toward the other, and vie with each other, as it were, for control of the life.

What, then, does the Apostle John mean when he says: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . he cannot sin, because he is born of God"? He is writing of that which is characteristic of the Christian. Whosoever abides in Christ does not practise sin; if he does practise sin, going on sinning deliberately, he has neither seen Christ, nor known Him. When we were unbelievers, of the world, of our father the devil, to sin was our attitude—for sin is lawlessness, going our own way (1 John 3:4; cf. Isa. 53:6), not subject to God's control. As unbelievers we were not troubled by sin; rather, we loved it. It was our nature to be lawless. But the Christian has a new nature. True, he still has the old, which has not changed one bit; but because he is a new creation, for whom old things have passed away, and all has become new, he no longer practises sin. He may fall into sin, but he hates it. The new nature, the divine nature, commits no sin; but when the Christian sins it is because the old nature has been yielded to, rather than the new. And when he sins, he is miserably unhappy till it is confessed and communion with God has been restored. No!—the believer does not practise sin. He abhors it, and rather than to live in the former lawlessness, he seeks to abide by the Lord's commands. "Whosoever is born of God . . . cannot sin" means, then, that the Spirit nature, when followed, produces no sin, but produces holiness. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). It is the Christian's attitude, his desire, to abide by the Word of God—not legality, but obedience; and he who has not this attitude needs to examine himself, to ask himself whether he has really put his trust in Christ, whether he has been born again. It is a solemn thought.

God has provided power that we need not sin, by the Holy Spirit. But we *do* sin. It is not of the Spirit, the new nature, but of the flesh, the old nature. And when we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One, who is the propitiation for our sins. But while we may sin, we do not practise sin; sinning will not be our attitude or desire. For no one who really loves the Lord will continue wanting to sin. When, however, some habit, some weakness, overtakes us again and again, it may be that we shall suffer chastening of the Lord, "for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6). If this be so with us, let us be exercised by the chastening, and "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths" for our feet, lest we be laid aside, as far as our testimony is concerned.

The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is constant. No Christian need expect it to be otherwise, for the flesh in the believer is no better than the flesh in the unbeliever. Regeneration does not improve the old nature; regeneration is the impartation of a new nature, Christ Himself coming into our hearts to take up His abode, by the Holy Spirit. Today, and tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, and all through this earthly life our hearts will be a battlefield in which the flesh exercises its desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. They are contrary to each other, opposites—the one is darkness; the other, Light.

How graphically this conflict is related by the Apostle Paul in Romans 7! Undoubtedly speaking of his own experience after His regeneration (for he says: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," that is, the new nature [vs. 22]), he declares: "For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I

consent unto the Law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25).

As one continues in the study of the Epistle to the Romans he will find that the case just set forth is not meant to be the *normal* experience of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who will surely progress beyond this. It depicts the quandary of the Christian who is troubled by the power of the old nature and who at length comes to the place where he finds that deliverance from it and the power of sin is in Christ alone. Yet certainly the passage proves beyond shadow of doubt the continuous presence in the child of God of the old nature, and the conflict that exists between the flesh and the Spirit.

Our triumph is in Christ. He is the Deliverer. But how can this deliverance be made effective in our lives, in my life? That brings us to our final point of consideration.

3. The Way of Victory: Life in the Spirit

Scriptures quoted at the beginning of this chapter give us the answer to our problem—the way of victory in the Chris-

tian life. We cite again certain selected passages. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). It is a fact not to be gainsaid, for it is written in God's Word, that as to the believer's position before God, he died when Christ died. We have been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:2, 3; *cf.* Gal. 2:20). Therefore we are to reckon on it, count it as fact, in practical experience. Again, we read: "Lie not one to another [other sins of the flesh are delineated in preceding verses], seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10; *cf.* Eph. 4:22-24). Reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin, we are to put off, as an old garment, the old man, and put on the new, which is spiritual and not carnal. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5, 6). The way to put off the old man in practical experience is to mind the things of the Spirit, and not the things of the flesh, the old nature. We are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," setting our affections upon things "above, not on things on earth" (Col. 3:1, 2).

Perhaps no clearer instruction can be found than that which is written in Romans 8:4: "Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and in Galatians 5:16: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." What does this mean? It means that we are to be submissive to the new nature, the divine life, the Holy Spirit, and to say "no" to all the appeals of the old nature, the flesh. That is walking in the Spirit. There is no middle course; we live according to one nature or the other. If

we are walking in the flesh, we are not walking in the Spirit; if we walk in the Spirit, we do not walk in the flesh. It is either black or white; there is no gray in the Christian life.

Suppose we get very practical in our thinking. The new nature needs food to feed on. A baby who is not fed will not grow—first he needs milk, and then more solid food for development. So with the new birth, the Christian life. At first we are to be fed with the sincere milk of the Word; then we are to develop by more solid food, but it is still the Word of God (1 Peter 2:1-3; *cf.* Jer. 15:16; etc.). It was the Word of God which sustained the Son of God in His earthly life, as can be observed in His temptation in the wilderness. It was ever His food. And the new nature is His nature in us. It must be fed.

Are we feeding the new nature or the old when we read salacious books? Are we walking in the Spirit or in the flesh when we mingle with the world and partake of its offerings? Are we subjecting ourselves to the Spirit or to the flesh when we neglect the Morning Watch? Is it living according to the Spirit or the flesh when we speak unkindly or maliciously, lose control of our tempers, tell untruths, converse uncleanly, and bear malice in our hearts toward some? In every instance these are carnal acts. To do them is to walk in the flesh, and not in the Spirit. Only as we feed our souls on the Bread of Life, only as our affections are set on heavenly things, only as we seek that which is to the glory of the Lord, only as we say “no” to the flesh and “yes” to Him, can we be properly said to be walking after the Spirit. Doing these things, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

Yes, we who are Christians have two natures—the old and the new. The only way to deal with the former is to deny its claims, to starve it. “Make no provision for the flesh”—give it nothing to eat. The only way to deal with the new

nature is to accept God's promises, and to feed it. How often we fall, until our hearts would fail us were it not for the keeping power of the Spirit, for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God. We grieve the Spirit, yes; but we do not lose Him, nor He us. By Him we are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). But we need neither to quench Him by indifference nor to grieve Him by disobedience and failure. For we have a Father in Heaven, a High Priest at His side, the Holy Spirit within. God "is able to do [for us] exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). Therefore, let us present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, and acceptable to Him, and let us "walk in the Spirit, and we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

CHAPTER XX

THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST

The subject of this treatise has been and is the object of much controversy in the Christian Church. And it would be unfair to those who dissent if we did not acknowledge that their objection to the doctrine of the Christian's eternal security in Christ is held to in all sincerity and devotion to purity of life among believers, for they fear that to teach "Eternal Security" is to invite license. However, we are convinced that they err—that the doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Believer in Christ is fully established by the Scriptures; that it does not lead to license, but to self-examination; and that to deny the teaching is to disparage the grace of God and the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God.

As in the cases of certain other doctrines of the Christian faith—for example, "The Holy Trinity"—the expression "Eternal Security" is itself nowhere to be found in the Bible. The Scriptures speak of eternal life and state that the Christian is "kept by the power of God," "sealed unto the day of redemption," and "perfected forever," but they do not employ the word *security* in the sense that we use it. Nevertheless, the doctrine is well denoted by the term, better, we think, than by another title for the same teaching, namely: "The Final Perseverance of the Saints." Whichever title is preferred, the glorious truth is that he who has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, regenerated by the Word of God and by His Holy Spirit, and justified by faith, is safe and secure by the grace of God for time and for eternity.

Our consideration of the subject will fall into three major divisions.

1. The Eternal Security of the Believer in Christ Is Declared in the Scriptures

There are two classic passages relating to the Christian's security. The one that is quoted most frequently, perhaps, is John 10:27-30: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

First of all, we would observe to whom this promise applies—to Christ's sheep. It is not to goats, nor to swine, but to sheep, His sheep. And who are Christ's sheep? Those who believe on Him are His sheep. In the verse that precedes the passage just cited we read: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you." Those who do not believe may profess to be His sheep, but they are not because they do not believe. Conversely, those who are His sheep are those who believe in Him—they hear His voice, He knows them, and they follow Him.

The second thing that we would call attention to is this: there is no conditional promise made to Christ's sheep. He did not say: "*If* you follow Me I will give unto you eternal life," but, "My sheep hear My voice . . . *and* they follow Me: *and* I give unto them eternal life."

Life that is eternal is not simply temporal and conditioned upon obedience. Life that is eternal is just what the expression denotes—eternal. In many passages of Scripture the duration of the life that those whose faith is in Christ receive is alluded to: the well-known John 3:36 declares that whosoever believeth in Him [Christ] hath everlasting life (*cf.* also John 3:15, 16; 5:24; etc.). Nowhere do we find a hint from our Lord that those who believe on Him will have

divine life for six months, or a year, or a decade, nor do we read anywhere that the life that is received through faith will last until a certain sin is committed, or an indefinite or definite number of sins, or anything of the kind. The life that is received through faith is eternal life; it is everlasting; it has no end.

Observe that no man is able to pluck Christ's sheep out of His hand or out of the Father's hand. It is as if the Father and the Son enclosed Christ's sheep within both of their hands, as indeed they do! Then what man can pluck them away? No man can. "But," someone may say, "perhaps no man can, but one can pluck himself away." Is the sheep stronger than the Shepherd? Of course not. And further, just that assurance might be given us for such a suggestion, four words are written in our passage: "they shall never perish." Surely that promise will answer him who has thought that one could pluck himself from the Lord's hand, or His Father's.

Those who are Christ's sheep, those whom He knows, will never perish. There are not a few who may profess to be His sheep but who are not. Indeed, they will perish surely; for theirs is not eternal life, but condemnation, because they have not believed in Him, but have loved darkness rather than light (John 3:17-19). To such—if they have professed to be His sheep—He will declare in the day of judgment, though they may greet Him, "Lord, Lord": "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

Not only is no man able to pluck Christ's sheep from Him or from the Father, but there is no creation, nothing in Heaven or earth, nothing in life or death, nothing present or future which is able to take His sheep from Him. This is assured in the triumphant exclamation of the Apostle Paul, which is the second classic passage having to do with the eternal security of the believer. "Who shall separate us

from the love of Christ?" the Apostle asks. "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature [creation], shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35, 37-39). Is there any contingency, any power, any personality not included in this promise? There is none whatever. *Nothing*, not even the powers of Satan, can separate us from God's love in Christ. And what is His love in Christ? It is that love that provided redemption and eternal life by grace as it was expressed on Calvary, which is ours through faith—and no man and no angelic being and no thing can separate us from it.

It hardly seems necessary to cite any further Scriptures, for in John 10 and Romans 8 it is surely established that the eternal security of the believer in Christ is the definite teaching of the Bible. But lest it might be thought that these are isolated passages and that their assertions are not found elsewhere in the Word of God, we shall refer to four other quotations.

The first is in the Epistle to the Ephesians. There, after the Apostle Paul tells of the blessing and privileges which are ours in Christ, he calls upon Christians to live holily, to walk worthy of our calling, to put off concerning our former conduct, the old man, and to put on the new, being renewed in the spirit of our minds. Certain very practical exhortations are made, and in their midst we find these words: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

Now it is to be observed that we can grieve the Holy Spirit, who indwells us as believers in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19).

Disobeying His voice, saying “no” to His pleadings, we sin against God. But note what the text says. It does not state: “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, for if you do, He will depart from you, you will lose Him.” Not at all! “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” You may grieve Him by sinning, but He will not depart from you. The new life in Christ is given us, spiritual blessings innumerable, strength, power, all the truths of God’s Word, and His enablement, in order that we should not sin—but “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” who is sin’s propitiation (1 John 2:1, 2).

The Holy Spirit is our seal. By Him we are marked out as Christ’s and kept by Him until redemption day. He is “the earnest [the pledge] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. 1:14), and God’s pledge will not be broken.

In the Epistle to the Philippians we have another promise of the Christian’s security. It is this passage that causes us to reject the term, “The Final Perseverance of the Saints,” preferring the caption that we have used for this doctrine. For it is not the saints who persevere, but it is the Holy Spirit who does so. Writing to believers in Christ at Philippi, Paul says to them: “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). There is no suggestion of a condition here, that if they never again commit a sin, the Holy Spirit will continue to persevere in that which He has begun. It is a limitless promise to all believers in Christ.

In Hebrews 10 we find the letter’s writer lauding the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ made on the Cross for sin, contrasting it with the offerings and sacrifices of former days, under the Law. Thus, he says: “But this Man [Christ],

after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:12-14). Who is it that is sanctified? It is those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, all of them, "washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:2; etc.). And such are said to have been perfected for ever—not just for a time, short or long, but continuously. An eternal work was wrought on Calvary, whereby the redeemed are sanctified for ever. The result of that work cannot be lost, once it is received through faith.

Finally, in Peter's First Epistle it is declared of Christians that they have been begotten again unto a living hope by Christ's resurrection from among the dead, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:4, 5). What is our inheritance in Christ? It is incorruptible, it does not fade away, it is *reserved* in Heaven for us. Is there any doubt that we shall receive it? No!—for we are "kept by the power of God through faith." He has promised that we shall receive our inheritance, and His promises are sure; they cannot fail.

We must conclude, and do assert with utmost confidence, that there is not one passage of Scripture quoted in the foregoing paragraphs, from both the Gospels and the Epistles, whether read within or apart from their contexts, that intimates in any way whatever that he who has put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour can ever be lost, but that to the contrary, he whose faith is in Christ is saved and safe forever, and that no person, or circumstance, or thing can interfere with or take from him God's everlasting gift of grace, eternal life in Christ.

2. Objections to the Doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Believer in Christ

Objections to the doctrine of eternal security are legion. We have not space to examine every one of them, but we shall choose those which we consider to be the most forcible, and endeavor to show wherein they fail. All the arguments of those who oppose the doctrine fall into two classifications: those based on the Scriptures, and those based on reason. We shall consider them in order.

A. Objections Based on the Scriptures

God does not and cannot contradict Himself. Neither does His Word contradict itself. It stands, therefore, that if there are two passages of Scripture which appear to be contrary to one another, the true interpretation of both passages has not been arrived at. Context must be considered and Scripture compared with Scripture until the right answer is found and the interpretation agrees with the whole of Holy Writ.

We submit that in the cases of the references already alluded to there can be no other interpretation than that which has been given. There is no possible shade of meaning and no hint, whether those Scriptures be read within or out of their contexts, other than that which has been stated—that the believer in Christ, one of His sheep, will never perish, that nothing can pluck such a one from His hand, that nothing can separate such from the love of God in Christ, but that he is perfected for ever, sealed by the Spirit and kept by the power of God eternally. That being so, in examining the texts which are said to imply, if not to teach directly, that the man who has once been saved can be lost, we need to put them to the same tests to which the foregoing Scriptures have been submitted.

Not necessarily in the position of the importance attributed to them, but in order of their appearance in the New Testament, we list the objections to the doctrine of eternal security.

(1) Matthew 13:18-23, notably verses 20-22: "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful." These words are found, of course, in our Lord's own interpretation of His Parable of the Sower. It is said that clearly He declared that some who receive the Word of God turn away, because of persecution or the attractions of this world, and that they become unfruitful. Thus, it is taught, the believer in Christ can be lost.

Elsewhere we have seen that tribulation and distress, etc., are unable to separate those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ from the love of God. Is there contradiction here? And if so, whom are we to believe, the Lord Jesus, or Paul? The answer is that there cannot be contradiction, for every word of the Bible is God-breathed. Examine the parable again, and you will see that only one class of hearers is said to have understood the Word—those who received the seed in good ground. Understanding it, they appropriated it and bore fruit. The wayside, stony place, and thorny ground hearers receive the Word, it is true, but it is not understood, and thus not applied to their own needs. Some even rejoice in its message for a while, but that is all. There is no fruit, and if there is no fruit it is because there is no life. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:17, 20). The Parable of the Sower does not teach that he

who was once saved can be lost, but that not all who hear the Word will be saved.

(2) John 6:66: "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." One has but to read the context to discern that not all who were disciples (the word means, simply, *pupils* or *learners*) of Christ believed in Him. See verse 64: "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him."

(3) John 15:1-6, notably verses 2 and 6: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away . . . If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

These statements of our Lord are from the well-known Parable of the Vine and the Branches. We need to study the parable and the symbolism of its figures to understand its teaching aright. God's vine of old was Israel (*cf.* Psa. 80:8; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:6; Hosea 10:1; etc.). As a nation Israel had failed; the vine was fruitless. Now the true Vine, Christ Himself, speaks to His own. A grafting was to take place; from among Jews and Gentiles alike new branches were to be grafted into the Vine. Some would be genuine—the grafting would strike and "take," and life would flow into the branches unto fruitfulness. But as in any grafting, other branches would not "take." They would be fruitless, because dead. The whole theme of the parable is fruitfulness rather than life; yet it is to be seen that some of the branches would have life, some would be dead. How can this be true of those who are grafted into the Vine? Will not all have life?

Fruit-bearing has to do with the earthly walk, has it not? There are many here who profess to be in the Vine, who have no life. Thus there can be no fruit. And when there is no fruit, the fruitless branch, the lifeless branch, is taken away

and cast forth. Never do we read that a branch with life is cast forth. Observe, please, three things: *one*, in verse 2 it is not said that any of his own are fruitless; it speaks only of "every branch that beareth not fruit"; *two*, in verse 3 Christ's own are addressed, and of them it is said that they are "clean"; and *three*, in verse 6, in which we are told of those who are cast forth and withered, our Lord changes the pronoun "ye" which He has been using, to the words "a man." Why? Because none of His own can come into this classification.

Were the Parable of the Vine and the Branches standing alone in the Scriptures, so that we did not have John 10, Romans 8, etc., it would be strong argument as to the possibility of a man once saved being lost. But since the Holy Spirit has given us these other passages to declare the everlasting salvation and security of the believer in Christ, the Parable under discussion cannot contradict this fact. Thus we discern that the "abiding in Christ" referred to in John 15 has to do with the exercise of faith in Christ. He who abides in Him is His own, and bears fruit. Others there are who profess to be His, but they do not abide—they are fruitless, for there is no life in them.

(4) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." It is suggested that here Paul expresses the fear that through some failure in his own life he may at length be lost. Is not this the same Paul who declares unequivocally that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ? Surely it is! Misunderstanding of the verse may be laid to the word *castaway*. It is the Greek *adokimos* and means, *disapproved*. Literally, he is saying that he is endeavoring to live in such a way that he will not be *shelved*, *put on the shelf*. He is not speaking of salvation, but of service. Many

a Christian who has been used as an instrument of God has failed so miserably in the Christian walk that God has had to shelve him, to deprive him of his testimony, for the sake of the Name of Christ and His cause, and it is this tragedy which the Apostle seeks to avoid. The passage has nothing to do with salvation. It looks forward, rather, to approval, or reward.

(5) Galatians 5:4, in particular the final clause: "ye are fallen from grace." On these few words, lifted out of their context, some have built their case against the eternal security of the believer in Christ. But read the whole passage, or, if you will, simply the verse in full. It is clear that it is not the Christian who is endangered with falling from grace because of sin, but it is he who rejects Christ's offering of Himself for sin and prefers to seek to be justified before God by the works of the law, who is placed in this category. Such isolated clauses do not teach the whole truth of Scripture, but must fall before the mighty evidences of the complete revelation of God in His Word.

(6) Colossians 1:21-23: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. . . ." There are other texts which have a somewhat similar suggestion. We may call them the "IF Passages." See, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:2: "By which [the Gospel] also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you"; and Hebrews 3:14: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

First, suppose we look at the Colossians passage. Perhaps the meaning will be more clear if we re-arrange the sentence,

putting the condition first: "And if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel [this being so] you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight." Of course all who are recipients of God's great blessing in Christ must continue in the faith, keep in memory what has been preached to them of the Gospel, hold the beginning of their faith steadfast to the end! None are Christians, none are believers in Christ who do not *adhere to* (the literal meaning of the words translated *continue in*) the faith. It is to this fact that our Lord was alluding, surely, when He declared: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). This truth is certainly implied in the Parable of the Sower, already discussed. It is not enough to give mental assent to the truth of the Gospel, nor is it sufficient to be stirred emotionally or to be convicted. These things may be tasting the good Word of God, but they do not of necessity suggest that assimilation is experienced. It must be taken and made our own. It must be embraced through faith. It must be adhered to—not only heard, but received and believed and held, grounded and settled, its foundations and its structure sure.

Many profess to be Christians who are not. The proof of Christianity is the adherence to, the continuance in, the faith. All who do that are truly saved, for they continue in and hold onto that which has been given them by grace. They make it their very own. Observe, too, that it is *the faith* which is spoken of—the whole body of Christian truth is to be adhered to by those who are Christ's.

(7) To conserve space we shall group here several Scriptures which are kindred in thought. 2 Thessalonians 2:3: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the

day of the Lord] shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . .”; 1 Timothy 4:1: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons”; 2 Timothy 2:18: “Who concerning the truth have erred . . . and overthrow the faith of some”; and 1 John 2:18, 19: “. . . even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

From the first three citations it might appear, upon cursory reading, that those who once believed in Christ might depart from such faith in Him and be lost. But in the light of His promise of eternal life and that His sheep will never perish, we ask ourselves again, as we have before: “What, then, is the interpretation?” It is not difficult to discern. In the Thessalonians passage the words translated *a falling away* are shown to mean, as they are written in the margin in certain editions, *the apostasy*: and it is the apostasy that will cause some to depart from *the faith* in the last times, suggested in the two Timothy quotations. They never had saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They never were born again. They never were Christians. They shared some of the benefits of the church. They were professors, but never possessors, and they are described in 1 John 2:18, 19, quoted above, as “not of us.” They were not Christians, but like Judas, who was one of the disciples without belonging to the Lord Jesus, they have joined the movement without being joined to the Lord. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all [or *altogether*] of us.” They were apostates, like the Modernists of our day who say: “I know all about the

doctrines of the Bible—the Virgin Birth of Christ, His Deity, His atoning sacrifice; but I don't believe a word of them." Hearing the faith and aligned with those who believe God's Word, they depart from the faith; they are apostates.

Three of the most oft-quoted texts to discredit the doctrine of the Christian's eternal security remain. In examining them we need to bear in mind their contexts and that the teaching of Scripture as a whole must be constant. If our interpretation of these passages dissents from or opposes other Scriptures, then it cannot be true, *provided we have the correct interpretation of those other passages*. We have sought to demonstrate that fact in the first division of this treatise.

(8) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

We should be less than honest not to recognize and admit that we have here a difficult passage. Surely at first glance it appears that it is possible for one who has once been saved to be lost. But such an interpretation contradicts John 10:27-29. "No it doesn't," some will argue. "Is not man a free moral agent who can make his own choice?*" Perhaps no man can pluck Christ's sheep out of His hand, or out of the Father's, but he can pluck himself out." And of those who hold these views, some will say: "Yes, I believe in the eternal security of the believer, as long as he is a believer. But I do not believe in the doctrine, 'Once in grace, always in grace,' for a man can cease trusting of his own will."

*Man's entire free moral agency is questionable in the spiritual realm. The unbeliever is the slave of Satan and of sin, while the Christian is the bond-slave of Christ (2 Tim. 2:26; Rom. 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:22).

Going back to John 10 for a moment, let us repeat what we have already stated. If our Lord had said: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me . . . neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand"—if that was all that He had said, by some stretch of the imagination it might be thought that "no man" refers to "no *other* man," and thus, we *could* pluck ourselves, by ceasing to believe, from the hand of God. Well, we have quoted accurately what our Lord said insofar as we have written it—but we did not cite it all. These words were omitted: "And I give unto them *eternal life*; and they shall *never perish*." *Eternal* and *never* are not temporal words; they are everlasting. Cogitate once more, too, on the all-embraciveness of those things which are unable to separate those who are Christians from the love of God in Christ. It must be seen that there is no course open to us but to seek earnestly for a deeper interpretation of Hebrews 6:4-6 than appears at first reading, or on the surface.

But before doing so, we would call attention to something which many, who hold to the belief that a person once saved can be lost, seem to forget. For the majority who take this position suggest that it is possible to be saved, then to be lost because of some sin or sins, then to be saved again, and so on. They use this passage as authority for stating that the saved can fall away into an unsaved condition, but neglect to see that if that were true, they could *never again be saved*. For the passage states that "it is impossible for those who . . . shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance."

Now to the interpretation. First, what is the context? One needs to study minutely the preceding chapters, and especially chapter 5 and the early verses of chapter 6, to

see the true picture. Briefly, it is this. Many in Israel had heard of Jesus, and had believed Him to be Israel's Messiah. But time had passed since His death and resurrection. He had not come back again or established the looked-for Kingdom, and they became discouraged. They did not appreciate the superiority of the new covenant over the old, but were tempted to go back to Judaism, with its forms and ceremonies, its offerings and baptisms. They seemed to prefer the typical forms which they could see to the realities which they could not see, but which were fulfilled in Christ. A high priest in the temple seemed better to them than the High Priest at the right hand of the Father. They had not progressed in their knowledge of Christ and Christianity; in fact, as we shall see, they were not Christians. They were elementary in their thinking, and needed milk. They were too undeveloped to be able to partake of meat. So the Holy Spirit warned them to leave "the word of the beginnings of Christ" (vs. 1, literally), and to go on, not laying again, that is, not returning to the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. These things, and those that follow in verse 2, belonged to Israel before Christ ever came to earth—repentance from dead works, faith toward God (not in the Lord Jesus Christ), baptisms (ceremonial washings; not Christian baptism), the laying on of hands (an Old Testament doctrine having to do with the laying of the hands on the sacrificial offering), etc. These things were but shadows of what was to come in Christ. Now He had come, and yet some of the Jewish people, believing that He was the promised One, still lingered in the things that pertained to the Old Covenant, and longed for them. Some were turning their backs upon the Lord and returning to that which they ought to have laid aside. They were apostates.

It is of such that the writer of this letter speaks. (1) Once

they had been enlightened as to who Jesus was, their Messiah and the Son of God. (2) They had tasted of the heavenly gift—but, as someone has put it, they never partook of the Bread of Life. (3) They were partakers of Holy Spirit (the article is omitted in the original)—they had perceived the blessing of His filling of the Apostles, and had experienced His convicting power. (4) They had tasted the good Word of God, the Good News, the Gospel—but they had never assimilated it for themselves. And (5) they had tasted the powers of the world to come—they had seen miraculous manifestations on the part of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. All these things could have been said of Christians, but there is nothing here that could not also be said of unbelievers. And of such as these it is stated that “it is impossible for those . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” Wilfully and deliberately turning their backs upon the Son of God after these experiences, these tastings of the blessings potentially theirs in Him, they would not again be renewed to repentance.

“Well,” someone may say, “you have said that the descriptive clauses found in verses 4 and 5 might be applied to believers in Christ as well as unbelievers. Then how do you know that they were not believers in Him?” The Holy Spirit has given us the answer, in verse 9: “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation . . .” In the case of those referred to above, there was no evidence “of things that accompany salvation”; they were not saved people who were in danger of losing their salvation, for they had never been born again.

(9) Hebrews 10:26-29, 38, 39: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking

for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? . . . Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Here again we must take into account the context. Read the whole chapter. The offerings of the Levitical code, bulls and goats, could never take away sins, but were a covering until Christ should come. He, the Son of God, offered Himself once for all. That one sacrifice for sin was an eternal sacrifice, and having offered it, the Lord Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, sat down at the right hand of God. The work of atonement was completed, and where there is remission, there is no more sacrifice for sin.

Among the Jewish people who had heard the truth and made profession of faith in Christ were some who yet did not actually trust in Christ and His sacrifice. Wilfully they sinned, rejecting His offering of Himself for them and continuing to utilize the burnt-offerings and sacrifices of the Law. But no longer were these offerings of any value or merit in God's sight. They were but shadows of the good things to come, which now had come. Christ was the substance. So, the writer says: "If we *are sinning* [lit.] wilfully after that we have received the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." We have heard the truth; we cannot, knowing it, reject it and then go back to the sacrifices of the Old Coven-

ant- for there remains no more sacrifice for sins. Christ has done it once for all, and apart from Him we are lost.

In verses 28 and 29 the key words (from the viewpoint of those who reject the doctrine of eternal security) are: "and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." It is said that the fact that such a one has been sanctified is evidence that he has been saved.

We have read many interpretations of these verses and have been much impressed by the suggestion that the sanctification spoken of here may be compared to the sanctification or setting apart of the nation Israel under the Old Covenant. In spite of the blood of that covenant there were not wanting among the Israelites those who lost its privileges through lack of faith. Just so all who at the time the Hebrews Epistle was written acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah might be said to have been sanctified by the blood of the New Covenant, professors as well as possessors of Christianity. In fact, the whole world has, in a sense, been set apart by the blood of the Cross, without which all would perish in their sins. But some, through lack of faith, are lost.

We submit, however, that the true interpretation is not that at all. We have purposely quoted the clause under examination as it is in the Authorized Version and as we are used to seeing it. Now we shall write it as we believe it should be rendered: "and hath counted as unholy [or *common*] the blood of the covenant with which He was sanctified." Observe the capitalization of the pronoun, *He*. We suggest that it was Christ Himself who was set apart unto God to be an eternal High Priest, through the blood of the covenant which He offered unto God. It was of this sanctification of Himself that He prayed to the Father: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19).

In verses 38 and 39 it is made clear that those who were drawing back had never been saved. The indefinite expression, "if *any man* draw back" is in direct contrast to the definite one, "but *we are not of them* who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

(10) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

As in the last instances, so here—while there are some things said which at first glance might seem to indicate that those referred to were Christians, closer examination shows that this is not so. They of whom the Apostle Peter writes are not said to be redeemed. They have escaped the pollutions of the world, but this may have been through Christian influence, Christian homes. They have a knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but He is not said to be *their* Lord and Saviour. They know the way of righteousness, but it is not told that they have been made the righteousness of God in Christ. The key is in verse 22. They are not sheep—they are dogs, sows. Had they been regenerated, so that they became sheep, then they would not have turned to the vomit of the dogs or the mire of the sows; for sheep do not do that. Those referred to, as in earlier passages, are those who have heard the sound of the Gospel of Christ and have been recipients of some of the blessings resultant from the Gospel—but they have never been born again. They are lost, but they were never saved.

We thus conclude our review of the objections to the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer in Christ that are based on Scripture. Other verses might be cited and answered in like tenor, but we shall allow this aspect of our case to rest here.

It will undoubtedly be claimed by some who do not hold the doctrine under discussion that we have set forth interpretations of these difficult passages of the Bible with a preconceived theological bias, using the texts discussed as "straw men" to be knocked down by our peculiar system of interpretation. But this is not so. For some time we ourselves were gravely troubled by the problems which we have scrutinized. We argued: "If words mean anything, such Scriptures as these deny the eternal security of the believer in Christ." But then we realized afresh that God's Word cannot contradict itself. We sought to find another interpretation of the portions in John 10, Romans 8, Ephesians 4, etc., which we reviewed earlier, and could find none. It was then that we realized that there must be another answer, and it was arrived at by earnest study of the contexts in every case cited. Our conclusions have been set forth above. We believe that they express the truth of God, *the* interpretation (for while there may be many applications, there can be only one true interpretation) of God's Holy Word.

No, these troublesome passages do not teach that he who has once put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour can ever again be lost. But they are very solemn words and should have a sobering effect upon Christians; for they sound a warning—that we should give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). What a tragedy, a double tragedy, to have heard the Word of Truth, to have come within the radius and sound of the Gospel of Christ, but not to have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and received Him—to be lost, cast into outer darkness for-

ever! Let those who have any doubts about their eternal destiny be certain that all is right with God, in and through Christ our Redeemer.

B. Objections Based on Reason

Others there are, earnest Christians, who say that they *cannot* believe in the doctrine of eternal security. They have seen some who seemed to give every evidence of salvation, who were ardent workers in Christian service, perhaps even preachers of the Gospel, who have later ceased to exhibit any interest whatever in the things of God, have fallen into grievous sin, and have even become embittered about spiritual things, sometimes denying Christ. Or if they have known of no such case, they imagine a circumstance somewhat similar to it. It is doubtful that any such as those illustrated or imagined were ever Christians. God alone knows. But let us make it perfectly clear that the doctrine of eternal security in Christ has to do with believers in Him, and not with those who simply profess Him, whose fate will be that of the apostates of whom we have been reading. Whatever the experience may be, remember that Biblical doctrines are not based upon experience or reason, but upon revelation, as it is written in God's Word. There it is declared that Christ's sheep have everlasting life and that they shall never perish. Are we to believe our experience and follow our reason rather than God's Word?

And let us ask: "If by falling into sin one loses his salvation, what sins, or how many sins, bring this to pass?" Surely a Christian does not lose his salvation every time he sins, else none would be saved for very many minutes. Then, *what* sins can take his new birth from him?

We are saved by grace through faith, and not of works (Eph. 2:8, 9). It is all of grace. Not one of us deserves salvation. Is He who saves us by grace unable to keep us

by grace? Will He who rejects works for our justification demand them for our perseverance, our security? Was not Christ's death on the Cross sufficient to atone for all our sins, those of the present as well as those of the past? They were all future when He died. To the Father our Lord prayed: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me" (John 17:11). Would you suggest that Christ's prayer was not heard and answered? Reverently we say it—if God fails to keep a single one of those for whom Christ died, He dishonors the Son and fails to fulfil completely that which was accomplished by His Son at Calvary. To reject the doctrine of the Christian's eternal security, however well-meaning this disallowance may be, comes dangerously close to doing despite to the grace of God, and to His love and power.

3. The Doctrine of Eternal Security Is Not a License to Sin, but an Incentive to Holy Living

There are those who reject the doctrine with the purest of motives—they are firmly and sincerely convinced that to hold the doctrine is to give license to sin. They will question in this wise: "Do you mean to say that a person can go on sinning as much as he pleases, and still be a child of God, still be saved?" We answer by another question: "You are a Christian? If you are, do you *want to go on sinning?*" This answer, of course, is a firm "No!" He who is a child of God, who has been born again, who possesses the new life, does not want to sin—he hates sin; he shuns sin. Sometimes he falls, it is true, and when he does his heart is nigh broken by that failure. He confesses that sin to the Father, and pleads the advocacy of Christ, knowing that God is ever faithful to forgive and to cleanse. The man who deliberately goes on sinning, who is callous to his failures, may have professed to be a Christian—but if he *wills* to sin, if he

enjoys sinning, if he claims that since he is saved in any event he might as well keep on with his sinning, perhaps he has never been born again. He is not one of the Lord's sheep, but a dog turning to his own vomit. He may have tasted the heavenly gift, but certainly he has never assimilated and digested the Bread of Life. He may say, one day: "Lord, Lord, did I not minister in Thy Name?" But the reply he will receive will be: "I never knew you: depart from Me."

Our salvation is not of works, but by grace; yet our salvation leads to good works, and unless there is some evidence of that salvation and of the new birth, it may be questioned, and quite justly, whether we have ever been born again. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The eternal security of the believer in Christ is a doctrine of the Scriptures. Thus we can have perfect assurance that we are saved and secure, knowing not only *in* whom we have believed, but knowing *Him*, and that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS

The insistence of the Scriptures that salvation is by grace through faith and that it is entirely apart from works on the part of man cannot be gainsaid, for it is written and rewritten in the pages of the Bible. But man is a one-sided creature in his thinking, as a rule, and so it is that many who have been indoctrinated in the Reformation's clarion call, "Justification by faith," seem to have lost sight of the fact that the Christian has been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." James 2:24 is no less a part of the Scriptures than Romans 4:5. The latter declares: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"; while the former reads: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." God's Word does not contradict itself. These seemingly opposed statements are vindicated as we examine the Scriptures as a whole and the contexts in which these remarks are written, to learn that the works of man, even the works of the Law, cannot save, but that salvation by grace through faith expresses itself by good works on the part of its recipient. Good works performed by the believer in Christ are the evidences of life, the fruits of righteousness.

Our consideration of the subject of good works will fall into four divisions.

1. The Demand of Good Works on the Part of the Believer in Christ

God's expectation that those who love Him shall walk worthily and in obedience to His laws is not confined to the Christian era, for long before the Son of God left Heaven's glory to become flesh this truth was written in His Word. For

example, under the Mosaic Law pardon for sin was accomplished entirely apart from any virtue of man, whose every imagination was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). Man could not please God, for all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of His holiness (Isa. 64:6). Salvation has always been by God's grace and of old was by means of the blood of the lamb, prefiguring God's true Lamb, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Man was saved by grace through faith even in those times, but God expected him, after that salvation was wrought out, to live in obedience to His commands. And the same is true in this age. It is a sad commentary upon the human heart to observe that now, even as of old, multitudes live as though they believed that the formal acknowledgment of God's decrees, or conformity to certain rituals, is sufficient, and that there is no need of obedience of heart and a worthy walk before Him. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for salvation has to do not only with the sins of the past and the estate in the future, but involves the present as well. The tree that brings forth no fruit is dead. The faith that does not issue in works is dead also.

Lest we be misunderstood, we would make it very clear that there is no suggestion in the Scriptures that good works can have any part in man's salvation. On the contrary, there is no merit for salvation in anything that man himself can offer God. In his natural state man is a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, without life, without hope, lost and defiled; born in sin and dead in sin, alienated from God because of sin and an enemy to God on account of wicked works (*cf.* Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 6:23; Psal. 51:5; Col. 1:21; etc.). Salvation cannot be by works of righteousness which we have done, but is by the grace of God and through faith in the Sin-Bearer of His provision, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins,

should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). Having submitted this fact, however, let us see what is expected of those who have availed themselves of God's grace through faith in His Word.

Space does not permit citation of the numerous Scriptures which call upon the believer in Christ to live holily and to perform good works. Their tenor will be understood by the recollection of a few of them which stress the fact that we are to be doers of the Word as well as hearers of it (James 1:22). "He that abideth in Me," said our Lord, "and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5). To Christians at Rome the Apostle Paul declared: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). In the Epistle to the Galatians, the very letter that demonstrates that no man can be justified in the sight of God by the works of the Law, and that believers in Christ cannot be said to be under the Law in any way whatever, either for justification or for life, the Apostle wrote: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). And what of the pleas for a worthy walk (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12), and that whatsoever we do in word or deed should be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17)?

Perhaps the idea of the necessity of good works on the part of the Christian is no more aptly illustrated than by the Apostle John and the Bondman James. The former writes: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17, 18). And again: "Beloved, follow

not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11). While James, whose teaching does not contradict Paul's but complements it and demonstrates how the guilty sinner, who before God is justified by faith, is justified before man by works, says: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doeth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:14-17).

There are two classic passages which make very clear the distinction between the bankruptcy of works for salvation and the necessity of works on the part of those who have experienced salvation. The first of these is, of course, Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." What do we need to add? Assuredly there is expressed here in terms most explicit that there is nothing man can do to earn forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but that he who *has* been saved, by grace through faith, saved from sin's penalty to life everlasting, is a new creature in Christ whose duty is to perform good works, thus vindicating our calling since before the foundation of the world that we should stand before God holy and without blame (Eph. 1:4).

The second outstanding Scripture that pertains to the subject is found in the Epistle to Titus: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and

renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:5-8). Here again it is predicated that salvation is not through any works on our part, but according to God's mercy and grace. However, in view of the mercies of God, it is stated unequivocally that it is incumbent upon the believer to do and continue in good works. So it is that again and again such expressions as these are found directed to Christian men and women: "that women adorn themselves . . . with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10); "well reported of for good works" (1 Tim. 5:10); "that they be rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6:18); "showing thyself a pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7); "let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24); and "that . . . they may by your good works . . . glorify God" (1 Peter 2:12).

2. What Constitutes Good Works

In an earlier paragraph we have included as pertinent, in citations having to do with good works, certain Scriptures that call upon the believer in Christ to live holily, to walk worthy of his high calling. Literally and strictly speaking, we suppose, the two are not entirely synonymous. Holy living has to do, primarily, with man's relationship toward God and obedience to Him; good works has to do with his relationship to his fellow men, but on God's behalf, and is also in obedience to Him. Faith will issue in works, but holy living will be the link between the two, it appears to us. For of what value good works if the life is inconsistent and disobedient? We need to remember the words of Samuel the Prophet to errant Saul: "Hath the Lord as great delight

in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). Good works on the part of the Christian, then, ought to be offered with an obedient heart and a yielded life, otherwise they will differ little from pagan virtues which are performed for conscience's sake but not for the Lord's sake. This is clearly implied in the words of our Lord: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24; cf. 23:23).

What are some of these good works? Preaching the Word to multitudes, of course; and preaching it to a few. Ministering to the infirm and needy. Giving one's life to missionary effort, at home or abroad. Being "a door-keeper in the house of the Lord." Sharing one's means with others. But not all good works are the so-called "big" things, the things that are seen of men, the things that pertain to public ministry of the Gospel. Indeed no! It is a good work to give a cup of cold water (Mark 9:41). It is a good work to make coats and garments (Acts 9:36, 39). It is a good work, surely, to control the tongue or the temper, to keep suppressed the unkind thought, or to serve faithfully in the home when necessity arises. It is a good work when the child obeys his parents, and when the wife submits herself to her husband. The number and name of good works are legion. But bear this in mind—these are good works and acceptable to God only when they are done in Christ's Name and for His sake. Unbelievers can perform many of these deeds, which indeed they do. But such works have no merit or standing in God's sight, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6). And even Christians can do these works in the

flesh, simply because they want to do them, or for some earthly reward, such as prestige and the regard of men. Good works are those acts which are wrought by the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ because the love of God is shed abroad in his obedient heart, and are performed in Christ's Name and for the glory of God. Thus the Apostle writes: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17).

3. How to Maintain Good Works

There is a verse to which we have already referred as alluding to the necessity of good works on the part of the believer in Christ—but it tells us something else as well. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8). Certain things are to be affirmed constantly in order that Christians might maintain good works. What are these things? They are enumerated in the verses that directly precede that which we have just quoted.

In verse three, there is a list of seven characteristics of the unregenerate man, a portrait of the natural heart of every man and woman: "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." In verses four to seven, seven things are told that took place on our behalf through Christ: the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared; God saved us according to His mercy, and not by works of righteousness on our part; He cleansed us by regeneration; He renewed us by the Holy Spirit; He shed the Spirit upon us abundantly through Christ; He justified us by His grace; and He made us heirs of Himself according to the hope of

eternal life. These are the things that are to be affirmed constantly, for they are good and profitable unto men.

It is a strange enablement for good works, perhaps, but God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. And to the child of God the reminder of what he was before Christ came into his heart, and what has been done for him and what he has been made in Christ are sufficient to cause him to maintain good works because of God's mercies. A similar teaching is found elsewhere: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). He is furnished for every good work who is indoctrinated in and acts according to the Scriptures.

In the Epistle to the Galatians we find listed for us the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control" (5:22, 23). Now these things are not good works, but the exercise of them will result in good works. And since they are the fruit of the Spirit, he who is filled with the Spirit will surely demonstrate their existence in his heart by doing good works, enjoined of God as well-pleasing to Him. To maintain good works, then, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

What is the secret of this filling of the Spirit? Denial of self, of course, and yieldedness to Him—but how is this accomplished? We would draw your attention to two passages of Scripture: one in Ephesians, and the other in Colossians. In the first, Ephesians 5:18, 19, it will be seen that being filled with the Spirit will result in melody in the heart and thanksgiving to God. In the second passage, Colossians 3:16, the very same results issue from allowing the Word of Christ to dwell within us. What is His Word?

It is God's Word. The Spirit's filling comes from being saturated with the Word of God. And since the fruit of the Spirit exercised makes possible the works which are pleasing to God and for His glory—to maintain good works we must know, live in, and abide by His Holy Word, doing whatsoever it may be, whether in word or deed, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

4. The Reward for Good Works

All that the Christian has or hopes for is due to the grace of God. While it is true that the laborer is worthy of his hire, when it comes to the eternal issues, salvation and life are not earned by the labors of our hands, but are the gift of God. In the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard we learn that it is the Lord's right to do as He wills with His own (Matt. 20:15), and it is not necessary for Him, though perfect in justice, to reward His people for their works. Thus, had He so willed, the thief who died on the cross directly after confessing his sins and placing his trust in Christ could be, by grace, the recipient of the same garland crowns in the glory as the ardent Apostle Paul, whose works were manifold. After all, no work of man is meritorious in God's sight. Our best services are imperfect in themselves, and further, they are our duty, our reasonable service on account of His mercies toward us. Need God thank us for doing that which it was our duty to do? Of our labors in Christ's Name we can only say: "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Yet marvellous grace of God—though He need not reward us for doing His bidding, He does so! In His loving kindness, mercy, and grace God overlooks and overrules the imperfections of our best and least works, and accepts them in the merits of Christ.

The fact of the accounting of the deeds of the believer in

Christ is told in 2 Corinthians 5:9, 10, where it is written: "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [well-pleasing to] Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat [the *bema*] of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It is not judgment for our sins that is spoken of here. They were atoned for at Calvary, and there is no judgment to them who are in Christ (Rom. 8:1). Here it is the *bema*, the judge's stand—and every Christian will stand before it to receive reward or loss of reward for the things done on earth as a Christian. The principle of this judgment of our works and the gracious giving of rewards is written in another message to the Church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. There we see that there is one foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Upon that foundation certain works are built—"gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." Every man's work (and the reference is to Christians, of course) will be made manifest then, and will be tried in the fire. If, in the light of God's wisdom, the work survives the fire of judgment, as will the gold, silver, and precious stones which will be brought out purified by it, that man will receive a reward. If, on the other hand, the work is perishable in the fire, as the wood, hay, and stubble, then that man will suffer loss—"but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." It may be that in that day some seemingly great service will dissolve in the flame, to bring only loss. Perhaps reward for that ministry has already been received of men—admiration, prestige, wealth, or something else; while some apparently lesser service, humble and unheralded, will show itself to be gold in the sight of the Lord. If so, He will reward it handsomely according to His grace.

No labor of love will be too insignificant for the Lord's notice, none will be too small to receive His commendation.

“Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple . . . shall in no wise lose his reward” (Matt. 10:42). Nor will that reward be measured equal only to the work itself, but will be dealt out multiplied and running over, as exemplified in these words: “Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17).

Scripture does not tell just what the rewards will be, except that in some instances they are identified as crowns: the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory (1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; *cf.* Rev. 2:10; 1 Peter 5:4). What are these crowns? We do not know, but they will be more than ample, more than satisfying, more than enough—so much more than we deserve, which is nothing. And with adoring hearts we shall have but one desire—to cast those crowns at the Saviour’s feet, who alone is worthy to receive glory and honor and power (Rev. 4:10, 11).

When will believers in Christ receive these rewards? It will be when the Church is caught up to be with the Lord. The Apostle Paul refers to it as “that day” (2 Tim. 4:8), and in it, he makes it clear, the reward will not be to him alone, but to all who love Christ’s appearing. That is the day and the event to which our Lord Himself refers among His last words to His Church on earth: “Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12). May ours be acceptable and well-pleasing unto Him.

“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, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

CHAPTER XXII

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Note: In view of the fact that we are planning to publish at a later date a volume devoted entirely to eschatology (to be called, *Things Shortly To Come To Pass*), in which the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ will be dealt with in considerable detail, this chapter is concerned only with the Fact of Christ's Second Coming, and its Relation, in point of time, to the Millennium. Only because this present work would seem incomplete without some reference to our Lord's Return, do we include this study.

Even a cursory reading of the New Testament will convince the most skeptical mind that its writers believed in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what is more, that the Lord Himself declared it. "I will come again," was His promise while He was still on earth, and, "Behold, I come quickly," His assurance from Heaven. The Apostles, without exception, witnessed to the Lord's Return in their speech and with their pens. Other New Testament writers, Mark and Luke, James and Jude, allude to it, while the apostolic Church as a whole, like the Thessalonians, having turned to serve the living and true God, was waiting for His Son from Heaven.

But we need not think that the return of Christ is taught in the New Testament alone. It is all through the Bible. Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses had visions of the Lord as the One who should come in triumph. To David a Son was promised who should sit upon an everlasting throne. The Psalms are filled with allusions to the King upon the holy hill of Zion. Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel give voice to the seraphic splendor and cherubic glory of the One whose Name is called Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. Joel, and Habakkuk, and Zechariah herald the great and coming Day of the Lord; while the Old Testament closes with the prophecy of the Sun of righteousness that is to arise, with healing in His wings. And though

his name and work appear in the New Testament, the great voice crying in the wilderness is that of one whom we might, in a sense, call the last of the Old Testament prophets. John the Baptist, too, predicted the second coming of the Lord.

It is quite true that none of the men just spoken of used the terms, "the return of the Lord," or "Christ's second coming," or the like. But all of them prophesied, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, of a day when the Anointed One (Messiah, Christ, the Lord) should come to judge His enemies and to establish, from His throne of power and glory, peace and plenty on earth; they told of a time when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and all nations will turn to Israel and Zion for blessing. These things did not take place when the Lord Jesus Christ was here the first time, when He came in humiliation and suffered the death of the Cross, for sin. But the prophecies are written in God's inerrant and un-failing Word, and they must come to pass. When will it be? It will be, and can only be, when Christ comes again, in power and great glory.

Our consideration of the subject will fall into three divisions.

1. The Personal and Visible Return of the Lord Jesus Christ

When we speak of "the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ," we are referring to a personal and visible return to the earth. It is quite true that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to dwell within the hearts of believers in Christ, as the Lord Himself had promised His followers (John 16:7ff). It may be said, also, that by His Spirit He lives within those who are His in this age, so that the Apostle Paul could affirm, "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20; *cf.* Col. 1:27). But this is not the second coming of Christ as it is made known in the

Scriptures. Neither is "the spirit of Christ that leavens and permeates the world," as some view it, nor "the Christian principle of the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man," that are being propounded by the modernistic theology, Christ's second advent of the prophetic Word. The first two suggestions are thoroughly true, but they do not fulfil the Biblical predictions as to the return of Christ. The last two theories are both untrue and wholly without scriptural foundation. The world is not being converted by the Gospel of Christ, nor leavened by it. God is calling out a people for His Name today, but they are in the minority. And God is not the Father of all men, nor are all men brothers. God is the Creator of all men, but the Father only of those who are born into the family by regeneration, through faith in Christ and by the Holy Spirit. All men are neighbors, but they only are brothers who are members of the same spiritual family by grace through faith. No! The second advent of the Lord is that event which is foretold in both the Old and New Testaments, and the fulfilment of His own promise—His personal, bodily, visible return to the earth, in power and judgment, in majesty and glory.

Can we doubt the witness of Him who is the center of the hope of His coming, the Lord Himself? He said: "I will come again." And the two heavenly visitors who bore testimony to His return declared, when the Lord had been taken up in a cloud out of the sight of His disciples, "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). It was not a spirit that was taken up on that ascension day, but the Lord Himself, bodily and visibly. And it was not a spirit for whom the early Church was waiting and looking. They were already, as believers in Christ, possessors of His Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; *cf.* Rom. 8:9b). The blessed hope which the Christians of the apostolic age

were looking for, and for which we, too, look, is "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). It is the manifestation that is to come, of which the Apostle John spoke when he wrote of it symbolically: "And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. . . . And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His Name is called The Word of God. . . . And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron. . . . And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11ff).

Men of old predicted a coming of the Lord that has not yet taken place. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14). Such an advent has not occurred to this time. The promise that God the Father made to His Son: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy Possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. 2:8, 9), was not fulfilled in our Lord's first advent, as the meek and lowly Jesus. The Child who was born, the Son who was given, whose Name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the Ages, the Prince of Peace, upon whose shoulders a government of peace shall rest, who will sit upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment and justice for ever, as prophesied by Isaiah (9:6, 7) is, indeed, the Saviour who came, and bled, and died nineteen centuries ago—but His first coming did not establish these predictions. The day of vengeance that will be His, and the resultant period when the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, when none shall be hurt or destroyed in

all the holy mountain (Isa. 63:1ff; 65:25) have assuredly not come to pass to this time. Christ is a Rock, the Rock of our salvation. But His mission as the Stone cut without hands, in the days of whose coming the Gentile world-powers will be broken and destroyed and the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Dan. 2:36 ff), was not completed when our Lord was here the first time. The prophets, as they wrote, did not perceive, perhaps, His coming in humiliation, even though that ministry was clearly defined, as in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. They seemed aware only of His coming in power. That is His second coming, for none of these things were fulfilled when He was here on earth the first time.

And listen to His own words again. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. . . . And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to another" (Matt. 24:27-31).

From Genesis to Revelation it is written that the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, will come in almighty power to judge and to reign, to destroy the enemies of God and to establish peace and righteousness. He did come to earth once, leaving Heaven's glory to take on the fashion of a man, that He might seek and save that which was lost. In that first advent He did not fulfil the prophecies of His glorious reign on earth, but those pertaining to His rejection and suffering. Therefore, if God's Word be true and unfailing, as it surely is, He must come a second time. Of this future advent He Himself made promise while He

was among us in the flesh, and the angels and the apostles bore witness to the same, after His ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on High. Finally, as He speaks through the seer, John the aged, he declares, in the last words ever attributed to Him: "Surely I come quickly." There can be no question that the Bible teaches the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, bodily and visibly, as He was taken away. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). The Bible is God's Word and it is sure. Christ is coming again.

2. The Manner of Christ's Return

It is clear from some of the passages already cited that in the day of the Lord, when Christ comes again in glorious power, He will bring with Him many people. Enoch declared that He would be accompanied by ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14), and John saw Him in a vision returning with the armies which were in Heaven (Rev. 19:14). There are other evidences to this fact. Zechariah tells us that in that day the Lord will descend against the nations who have ravaged Jerusalem. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," and the mountain itself shall cleave in the midst, and the people shall flee. In that day, says the prophet: "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. 14:5). Again, the Apostle Paul, writing of this event, confirms the fact that the Lord's own will be with Him in that day, saying: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). Since His Church is to reign with Him over the earth (Rev. 20:6), those who compose the Church must be with Him when He comes to reign.

But there is another aspect of the return of the Lord. It is not a coming with His saints, those whose trust is in Him,

but a coming for them. On the night of His betrayal, when the Lord Jesus spoke those wonderful words of comfort to His perplexed disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled," He went on to tell them that He would come again. "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Here He does not speak of coming to earth with His saints, to judge and to rule, but He tells of His coming to receive them to Himself, to take them to the house of many mansions, that where He is, they also may be.

In the great passage that reveals the translation of the Church, when those who have died in Christ will be raised, and a living generation will be caught up with them in the clouds, it is to meet the Lord in the air; that we who believe that Jesus died and rose again, our Saviour and Lord, may be with Him forever more (1 Thess. 4:13 ff). Again, that is not a return to earth with His saints, but a coming into the air, to receive them to Himself.

The order of these two events is the exact reverse of the order in which we have presented them. This is very obvious—for the Lord cannot return with His saints, with us, until after we are with Him. And all His saints will not be with Him until the glad rapture-shout is heard, when, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, His blood-bought people will be caught up as a unit together, the dead raised to life, clothed in their resurrection bodies, and the living, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to bodies incorruptible and immortal, like unto His body of glory (1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:21). We shall be like Him in that day, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). Then our redemption will be complete, for not only shall we

have been washed from our sins and be the recipients of the new nature by the Holy Spirit, but that for which we have waited, for the redemption of our bodies, will also be fulfilled (Rom. 8:23).

The order, then, of these two aspects of the Lord's return is: first, He will come into the air for His Church, which will be caught up to be with Him forever; and second, He will come to the earth with His Church, and will establish His kingdom on earth, over which we, too, shall reign. What sort of interval will come between these two predicted events we shall not discuss here, as this subject and the details connected with it do not come within the scope of this article. Here we are concerned merely with the fact of Christ's return, the manner of it, and when it will take place. And that brings us to our final point—

3. The Time of Christ's Return

In speaking of "the time of Christ's return," we are not suggesting that a date can be set. This would be both unscriptural and impossible. When our Lord's disciples asked Him, just prior to His ascension: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He replied: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:6, 7), while earlier, in His great pattern of prophetic events, the Lord Jesus declared: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:36). So then, we are not endeavoring to set any dates. "The time" that we are considering is the time of Christ's return in relation to the Millennium, for that is the popular designation of the period when He will reign over the earth.

Millennium comes from two Latin words: *mille*, meaning *a thousand*; and *annus*, which means *year*. It is taken from

the expression that appears six times in the early part of Revelation 20, where we are told that those who have part in the first resurrection "shall reign with Christ a thousand years."

There are currently three schools of thought about Christ's return in relation to the Millennium, called Post-Millennialism, A-Millennialism, and Pre-Millennialism.

The Post-Millennialists hold, as their name indicates, that Christ will return *after* the Millennium. Their doctrine is, in very brief terms, that the leaven of Christianity will gradually permeate the whole world; that things are getting better and better all the time, and that at length peace and righteousness and godliness will prevail over the whole earth through the growth of Christian teaching. The Millennium will thus be ushered in by man's efforts, according to their view. One of two things must therefore be true, if they are right: one, Christ cannot possibly come for at least a thousand years; or two, the Millennium has already begun. To this latter suggestion we can only say that if the condition of the world today is the glorious Millennium predicted in the Scriptures, then we do not know what words mean. But the Bible does not promise increase in godliness or universal acceptance of the Gospel in this age. On the contrary, see Luke 18:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-4; 4:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 John 2:18. We have examined the Scriptures from cover to cover, and do not find one shred of evidence to confirm the post-millennial interpretation of them.

The A-Millennialists teach that there is to be no Millennium, the prefix *a* meaning *without*. They hold that Christ will return, but that His coming again has no relation to the Millennium, since there is none. Many A-Millennialists look for the Lord's imminent second advent; they simply reject the doctrine of an earthly kingdom. The promises

made to Israel, according to their view, must be spiritualized. They apply to the Church in this age, so they claim. But even if one ignores the direct mention of the thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints in Revelation 20 (by what right, we do not know), it is evident from both Old and New Testament Scriptures that He is coming to the earth, and that He will reign over it. The promises made to the nation Israel for their restoration are predictions having to do with earthly glory for an earthly people. The Church is a heavenly people who are to be caught up to be with the Lord. The throne promised to the Son of David is an earthly throne, for David had no throne in Heaven. The kingdom for which Israel looked was an earthly kingdom in their own land, and cannot for a moment be thought to be the standing of Christians in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. The very last question our Lord's disciples asked Him here on earth has already been cited, but it bears repetition. "Lord, wilt Thou at this time," they asked, "restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Did He tell them that Israel would have no earthly kingdom? Did He say that the promises made of old, to David and to the nation as a whole, had been misunderstood by them, or that these predictions had a new meaning now that He had suffered, and died, and risen again? Did He say that they were not to look for such a kingdom any more? Did He indicate in any way whatever that what they longed for would not come to pass? He did not. He said: "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." Certainly the earthly kingdom will come. Christ will be its King—King of kings and Lord of lords. That earthly kingdom is the Millennium of which we speak; it is the government of judgment, justice, and peace that the prophets foretold, as they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Pre-Millennialists believe that that kingdom cannot be ushered in until Christ Himself comes and establishes it. They hold, therefore, that the Lord must return in power and glory before there can be a Millennium. Space does not permit the multitudinous citations that might be made which declare that the Lord will return; that He will reign; that His kingdom will be on earth, centered in Jerusalem; and that His government will be one of righteousness and peace. Already we have quoted some passages that foretell these very things. Here are a few more.

“Thine house [David’s] and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Sam. 7:16). “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:2-4; *cf.* also 11:6-9). “Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness . . . and My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isa. 32:1, 18). “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the

land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers" (Jer. 3:17, 18). "And in the days of these kings [Gentile world-powers predicted by the prophet] shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

In these few quotations from the Old Testament we see that our premise is based on Scripture—that the Lord will reign upon the throne of His father, David, over an earthly kingdom of righteousness and peace. Did this take place when He came the first time? Indeed it did not. It is yet future. He Himself prophesied: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations. . . ." (Matt. 25:31, 32). This is not a heavenly scene, nor a spiritual scene. This prediction is like those of the Old Testament prophets; it concerns an earthly kingdom and earthly peoples. It is the kingdom that the King of kings and Lord of lords will establish at His coming in power and glory, the kingdom over which His blood-bought saints will reign with Him for a thousand years, the millennial kingdom. It cannot come until its King comes. Therefore, we believe that the return of Christ is premillennial.

Someone may ask: "Well, what difference does it make whether He comes before or after the Millennium? What difference does it make if there is or is not a Millennium?" It makes a great deal of difference. In the first place, the honor of God demands a millennial kingdom, else His Word would fail. And second, our whole philosophy of life, as it were, is based upon the premillennial return of the Lord. If the Postmillennialist is right, then (1) the Church has certainly failed, as has the Gospel itself, in improving man-

kind and the world so much as to bring in the kingdom without Christ's return; and (2) we cannot look for the coming of the Lord for at least a thousand years. But the Bible does not promise that the world will get better and better before He shall come. Rather, it declares that apostasy will be on the increase, as will godlessness, blasphemy, dishonesty, immorality, and a host of other things (2 Thess. 2:2, 3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). There will be wars and rumors of wars, and nation will rise against nation (Matt. 24:4 ff). It will be, just prior to Christ's return, as it was in the days of Noah, the world going about its business without any thought of the coming of judgment (Matt. 24:37 ff).

Not only do the Scriptures teach that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is premillennial, but it is also imminent. First, He will come for His own; then He will come with them to the earth. We cannot know the day or the hour, but we do know that the translation of the Church can occur at any time, for there is no Bible prophecy unfulfilled which must precede it. And as we see all about us, in the signs of the times, conditions strangely similar to those which will exist in the last days, we have the right to believe that the Lord's coming may be soon, at any moment, perhaps today!

The return of the Lord is the hope of the Church, the blessed hope for which His own are looking. For, as we have said, the first aspect of that advent will be the rapture of the Church, so wonderfully described in 1 Thessalonians 4, when the dead in Christ will be raised, and together with a living generation of believers, will be caught up to be with the Lord, and so shall we ever be with Him.

Christ's return is also the hope of the nation Israel. In that day they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him, and a nation will be born in a day, to worship Him, to be blessed by Him and to live in the smile of His grace (Zech. 12-14; etc.).

And the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. When He comes, and not till then, will wars and strife cease, and peace reign in the earth, and righteousness; not till then will the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

“Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me,” says the Man in the glory. That it will be premillennial, imminent, and soon—this is our conviction, our hope. “Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3).

“He which testifieth these things saith, *Surely* I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

The End

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