

everyone who has one-time accepted Christ is going to be in heaven, heaven is going to be filled with people who have not loved Christ enough to live for Him, who have not believed Him enough to do as He said. Do you mean to tell me that God is preparing heaven for spiritual fellowship throughout eternity with such people who are *unspiritual*? Such an unthinkable, outlandish teaching! To what folly it brings all the work of God! I don't believe a word of it. It isn't Bible. It's ridiculous!

C. Such A Doctrine Would Actually Destroy The Right Of Human Choice After Conversion.

I have always believed as I studied the Bible that man had the power of choice. God tells him what to do, but He doesn't force him to do it. He tells him what not to do, but He doesn't keep him from doing it. God wants all men to be saved, but He doesn't force anybody into becoming a Christian. He wants them to, but if they desire not to be, then they don't have to be Christians. Of course, they will be judged in the end for their disobedience to the will of God. When people become Christians, of course, they want to go to heaven; they want to do the will of God; they want to be Christians; they want to live apart from the sin of the world; they want to be in fellowship with God's people; they mind the spiritual things of life. Bear in mind, they do the above through choice--God does not force them to become Christians. Now, with the passing of time, what can happen? The person can lose his love for God; he can get so he doesn't care for worship services; spiritual things are boring to him; sin is alluring; he would rather be with worldly people than with Christian people; he isn't interested in heaven any more; he doesn't care about God. Now, here is what I want to know: does that man still have the power of choice? or has the fact that he was one-time converted destroyed that trait peculiar to mankind? Friends, man still has the power of choice. He became a Christian because he chose to, and the grace of God would have given him salvation--not because he deserved it, but because Jesus Christ purchased it for those who would love Him enough and believe Him enough to choose to be saved. Now that he has allowed sin to change his choice from God to sin, from spiritual things to worldly things, he still has the power of choice. Christ doesn't force a man to abide in Him. If He did, all would abide in Him. But, He has said even to His people that a man must reap what he has sown; he must accept what he has chosen; he must remain true and not grow weary in sowing to the Spirit if he will ever reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-9). I say that this teaching of "once saved always saved" actually destroys man's power of choice after conversion, and surely such a teaching is thereby judged ridiculous!

D. Such A Doctrine Would Make The Promises Of God To The Overcomers Apply To Those Who Don't Overcome.

Many promises are made to God's obedient children. In the Book of Revelation, for instance, there are a good many such promises made to the faithful, and those promises relate to salvation. But, "once saved always saved" would make those promises apply to people who don't overcome when they are promises to an altogether different group of people--the overcomers. Let us notice. Rev. 2:7 says that Christ will give to eat of the tree of life in the midst

of God's paradise "to him that overcometh", but "once saved always saved" says that He will give them to eat of that tree whether they overcome or not. Again, Rev. 2:11 says that "he that overcometh" shall not be hurt of the second death (hell). But, "once saved always saved" says they won't go to hell even if they don't overcome. What does that do to Christ's promise? It is no promise at all, according to that. Rev. 2:17 says Christ will give to eat of the hidden manna as well as the white stone "to him that overcometh". But, "once saved always saved" promises the hidden manna and the stone to people whether they are overcomers or not. They are promising something that Jesus didn't. Rev. 2:26-28; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 3:21; and Rev. 21:7 all contain other promises to those who overcome. They are not made to those who do not overcome. I say that any doctrine that makes God's promises to the overcomers apply to those who do not overcome is guilty of giving people a ridiculous doctrine! And I believe you can see it.

What shall we say, then, in conclusion? Simply that God commands and demands faithfulness of His people. No one will be saved who does not come to Christ for salvation, and no one will have that salvation unless he abides in Christ. The Scriptures are very clear upon this subject, and only by twisting certain clear passages and disregarding the passages dealt with in this study can people believe and teach to the contrary. I can't understand why preachers will try to get people to be faithful in their religious life and then turn around and teach them a doctrine that will promote unfaithfulness. I know that my Lord has not done it. May God help every Christian reading and studying these lines to believe in the absolute necessity of faithfulness enough to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And may every alien sinner reading these lines not get interested in being baptized unless he is willing to abide in Christ until death afterwards.

The Shepherds of the Flock

In our last study, we discussed the necessity of continuing steadfastly following baptism. That such faithfulness is necessary cannot be questioned. The Scriptures are very clear concerning it. In bringing about such faithfulness, we know that the individual himself is charged with the responsibility of seeing that he continues in faithfulness. To each one of us, the Bible would say:

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

This does not mean that each one is to make up his own plan of salvation, but to busy himself carrying out the requirements that God has laid upon the Christian for salvation. But, in addition to each convert bearing the

certain obligation to keep himself faithful, the concerned Lord has made each Christian responsible to the extent of his ability to aid, protect, and help in whatever way he can every other Christian. The next study concerning fellowship will treat this more fully.

But, "everybody's business is nobody's business." We have all heard that old, familiar statement many times, and we know there is a lot of truth in it. Therefore, though God has charged the individual to be faithful and each Christian to help him be faithful, divine wisdom has proceeded to create an office in the church with the express purpose of seeing that each individual in the church is particularly helped and overseen in the matters of spiritual growth and faithfulness. That office, the office of the shepherd, is to be the subject of this present study.

I. The Elders Are The Shepherds Of The Flock Of God.

A. By Title.

In Eph. 4:11, we read:

"He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The Greek word translated "pastors" in the above verse is "poimane", which means to shepherd, to feed. It is evident that the above passage is setting forth given offices in the church. "Apostles" and "prophets" were inspired offices in the early church. The men filling those offices had their actual service to Christ channeled through either the office of an "evangelist" or a "pastor". However, today, since the days of inspiration, there are no "apostles" and "prophets" living among men. But, the work of "evangelists" and the work of "pastors" still go on and will go on by living men as long as the church exists upon the earth.

Who are these men "pastors"? They are distinct from "evangelists" as is seen from the verse last quoted. Bible scholars are quite generally agreed that "pastors" are "elders". I think this is evident when we read I Pet. 5:1,2,4:

"The elders which are among you I exhort...Feed the flock of God which is among you...And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Notice four things: (1) Peter was addressing the "elders" (2) He exhorted them to "feed" the flock of God. Remember that the word "pastor" in the Greek was "poimane". The Greek word translated "feed" in the above passage is "poimane"--this shows that the "elders" are to "pastor" the flock. They are the "shepherds" among the sheep. (3) Notice that it is the "flock" of God which the elders are exhorted to feed. This word fits the picture--that of a shepherd. (4) Christ is referred to as the "chief Shepherd" in the above passage. The Greek word translated "chief Shepherd" is "arki-poimane", which breaks down into "arki" (higher) and "poimane" (pastor or shepherd). "Chief Shepherd" is a relative expression signifying that there were "under shepherds". In the setting, it is evident that the elders are the under shepherds.

So, the elders are the shepherds of the flock from the

standpoint of one of their titles.

B. By Work.

By the work left for them to do, the elders are the shepherds of the flock. What did Paul tell the elders of Ephesus to do? Listen to it:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

It is not hard to see to whom the Holy Spirit has committed the work of shepherding the flock of God. The above passage shows that that work has been committed to the elders. They are the pastors (the shepherds)! But, another look at I Pet. 5:1,2 in this regard will not hurt:

"The elders which are among you I exhort...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof."

Let me say that no more responsible task has been committed to anybody than has been committed to the elders of the church. I would hate to go to the judgment bar of God having been unfaithful to the work of an evangelist, but were I an elder, I would fear facing my Lord on the day of judgment if I had not been faithful to my work as an elder! To them has been committed the work of shepherding the sheep of God's flock.

C. By Fact.

Without going into detail to consider who all might be included under the expression "them that have the rule over you", I think it will be conceded by all with any amount of Bible knowledge at all that the elders would be included in it. Let us notice how Heb. 13:17 reads:

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief."

Here is a fact stated: the elders (those who rule) must give an account to God. They are responsible for those under them! They are "stewards over God's heritage" (I Pet. 5:3), and stewards must give an account of their stewardship. Yes, the elders are to be God's shepherds over His flock. It is an office and a work fraught with both joyous satisfaction and fearful responsibility. A crown of glory that fadeth not away is reserved for those who do their work well (I Pet. 5:4), but the bitterest of condemnation will await those who have shirked their holy responsibilities toward those who have accepted Christ.

II. The Sad Condition Existing Too Commonly Today.

A. Some Desire No Elders.

There are actually some who desire to have no elders over them at all. This is nothing short of a spirit of re-

bellion. It is trifling with divine wisdom. It is setting aside the Lord's plan. I am not saying that unqualified men should be put into office in order to have elders, but I am saying that every congregation ought to have elders or be looking forward to the day when some in their midst will be qualified to accept that responsibility. But, that is not the way that some would have it. I remember a lady approaching seventy years of age who, when admonished to respect the oversight of her elders, said, "I don't intend to take orders from any man!" She never married, and with such an attitude, it is a good thing she hadn't. She represents that group that would rather the church have no elders, for they want no restraining hand upon their actions and no rebuking and counseling when they have done wrong. But, that is not the way the Lord would have it. When a sheep gets sick, the shepherd is quick to try to help it. So must elders care for the spiritual health and well-being of the sheep of God's flock. But, some do not want it that way.

B. Too Many Congregations Have Disqualified Men Filling The Office Of The Eldership.

Many congregations have elders who have several living wives. Others have elders whose children are not living right and whose wives are not in subjection. Others have elders who cannot even teach a class, much less exhort and convince the false teacher as elders are supposed to do (Tit. 1:9-11). Still others have elders who drink, others who smoke and chew, others who have an impure speech, others who are "hot-headed", others who are not fully honest in their business, and others who have anything but a good report of them that are without. I am sorry these conditions exist, but I cannot deny them, for they do exist! I do not see how that preachers can preach "loyalty to the Word of God" and then go along with such conditions in the church. How can they go out and call on outsiders and tell them, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent"? Doesn't the Bible lay down positive qualifications as to the qualifications of elders? Yes, just as plainly as it does the qualifications for becoming a Christian! But, so many people today say, "Well, it doesn't have to be just like the Bible says about those qualifications." And I ask, "If it doesn't have to be just like the Bible says about the qualifications of elders, how do you know that it has to be just like the Bible says about the plan of salvation?" I look out, and the denominational world is busy scrapping the plan of salvation that our blessed Lord gave, and I look out again, and I see congregations scrapping the qualifications for the elders that the same Lord gave. How can people rightfully claim to be following the Bible when they do things like that?

I believe those qualifications. They are found in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-11. I know this, if men are not qualified for the office of God's shepherds, they will be unable to do the work of His shepherds. God wants His flock shepherded. It takes the right kind of men to do that work. That is why God demands the qualifications that He does.

C. Few Elders Are Actually Shepherding The Flock Today.

Come into a congregational gathering on Sunday morning as a stranger and say to one of the members that you would like to see one of the pastors, and he would in all probability say to you, "We have only one--I'll get him (a preacher);" or, "Just a minute--I'll get Brother Smith (a preacher)." How many members would know enough about the Bible to get one of the elders for the stranger? Come into either of the Sunday services, and who brings the message in ninety-nine out of one hundred congregations? A preacher whom the people call "the pastor"--not one of the elders. Seldom in the average congregation have the members ever heard a message from the lips of any of the elders. They have a hired substitute year in and year out to do their "feeding", and then they bawl the Methodists out for adopting a substitute for immersion! That is just another one of the many inconsistencies to be found among some who holler long and loud about "No book but the Bible, no creed but Christ, no name but the divine." Who is prepared to deny these things?

Seldom in the average congregation have the members ever been called on by any of the elders. Seldom have they been encouraged by them personally to do right. Seldom have they been warned by them when about to do wrong. If there is any of that to do, they trot the preacher down to see the people, or it never gets done. And you know this to be a fact!

If Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist, and he was (II Tim. 4:5), then elders are to do the work of elders. That work is to shepherd the sheep of God's flock. Praise the Lord for those relatively few elders across the country who are busy at the work given them by the master. They are dear men in Israel. They have as hard a work to do as any evangelist--possibly harder! May the Lord help them to do it and to do it well. Theirs will be a blessed reward--an everlasting crown of glory given them when the chief Shepherd returns (I Pet. 5:4)! But, what will happen to men who pose as elders, but do not do the work? Possibly the same thing that will happen to evangelists who do not evangelize and to members who are not actually Christians. I say, according to the Word of God, it is a fearful responsibility to be an elder in the Lord's church.

By way of conclusion, let me say that Sheep need a shepherd. If sheep were turned loose permanently to shift for themselves, how many of them would survive the obstacles? Possibly a few would be left after a few years, but very few. Under the present-day way of little or no shepherding of those converted to Christ, some do survive (at least to a degree), but if the Lord's plan of shepherding the flock were followed, how many more would survive, and how much stronger would even those be who are now surviving!

If I were an elder, I would want to give myself to the work of pastoring as much as I now give myself to the work of an evangelist. I would expect the Lord to be with me in my work. I would expect to see some hard times as I did my best to serve the Lord in that capacity. I would expect to see much good accomplished through my consecrated efforts. I would seek to improve myself so that I could do my work better. I believe I would seek as much

preparation for my work as an elder as the average preacher today seeks for his work, The sheep needs just such shepherds, and may God help each man now filling that office who reads these words to take these words seriously. And may every Christian man reading these words who might qualify for that work actually desire that work enough to seek that holy office.

The Fellowship of the Church

When one becomes a Christian, he becomes a part of a spiritual fellowship. Birds of a feather flock together, for they that have something in common with each other that makes them alike and that similarly distinguishes them from other birds. Even so do Christians have that "togetherness" because of those things which they have in common and because of those things which distinguish them from the world about them. Christians know what it is to sing together, pray together, study together, work together, weep together, rejoice together, and hope together. Certainly one's Christianity ought to be questioned who does not desire to be in fellowship with those who are God's people. Such is actually a violation of a number of essential elements of Christianity.

In this study, we wish to discuss two things: (1) we should seek the fellowship of the saints; and (2) we must be careful not to get in with wrong fellowship.

I. We Should Seek The Fellowship Of The Saints.

Here are a number of reasons why:

A. The Example Of The First Converts:

One of the four things affirmed of the very first converts to Christianity was their faithful continuance in the fellowship:

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

To those of us interested in the pattern left for us by the apostolic church, the above means much. If we would follow that example today, we must emphasize the fellowship as it is in the Bible.

B. The Example Of Saul Of Tarsus.

Saul of Tarsus was a marked contrast to many today who claim to be Christians. That was even true of the question under consideration. He had been such a bitter enemy against the church. How the church should have desired his conversion! Even the dying Stephen had prayed for him. But, when he was converted, it was hard to convince some of the church that he had actually become a Christian. When he came to Jerusalem, he had an experience that would have dampened many people's interest in the church. Acts 9:26-28 says:

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him unto the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem."

Prior to this, he had narrowly escaped with his life from Damascus. At such a time, he certainly needed the comfort of God's people. But; instead, they snubbed him, though in all good intentions. But, nevertheless, had he been put together on the sensitive pattern of a lot of present-day people, he would never have had any desire to have been a part of their fellowship in the future. But, when Barnabas took him to the apostles and vouched for his conversion to Christ, they welcomed him into their midst, and he was a blessing to them, and they were a blessing to him. Saul, then, is a Biblical example of a man who sought church fellowship and would not be denied it. What an example for all today to desire the fellowship of God's people!

C. We Need The Fellowship Of The Saints.

I appreciate that good song whose words go: "I need the prayers of those I love." Those words are so true, and I need the strengthening fellowship of those dear saints with whose life mine can be associated in the way that God intended when He made the church into a fellowship. There is genuine encouragement to live for Christ in the worthy lives around us with whom ours can be associated. When one is thrown out into the world to make a living for himself and his family, he is cast alongside those who know not our Christ and who display a spirit foreign to ours. We would have to go out of this world to be rid of the sinful element, according to Paul (1 Cor. 5:9,10). How good it is to gather in on prayer meeting night to pray with those whose spirit seeks God as does ours! One reason, in my judgment, why some who claim to be Christians do not search out the fellowship of Christians is that sin is not as abhorrent to them as it ought to be. When one does personal work, he gets so weary of hearing people express their loose ideas of religion and their broad ideas as to Christian living. Patiently, he may teach them what the Scriptures say only to have them counter with such statements as: "If that's right, then there are going to be mighty few saved"--not meaning to say that you are right, but to indicate that you are badly mistaken even though you have shown them what the Bible teaches. How good, I say, after such experiences to come to the assembly of those of like precious faith and hear the blessed gospel preached that confirms one's faith and strengthens him in the way that he knows is right. Yes, we need the fellowship of God's people, and he who does not avail himself of that which is available to him is not only slighting his spiritual life, but he is in open violation of God's plan for our lives, for He has willed that we continue in the fellowship of His people.

D. Others Need Our Fellowship Also.

Don't get the idea that the church is composed of inept weaklings simply because we are saying that we need the

fellowship of other Christians and they need our fellowship. Let me say that the church is composed of the strongest people on earth, but let us not overlook the fact that we have a great adversary in the devil, and he works through the weakness of our mortal flesh. Why do we say that others need our fellowship? Because the Bible gives us great responsibilities toward our brethren in Christ. It tells us to exhort one another lest some be led away from God (Heb. 3:12,13). It tells us to pray for one another (Eph. 6:18). It tells us to take from our lives all things that might prove a stumblingblock to our brethren (Rom. 14:21). It tells us to help one another in times of financial need (I John 3:17). It tells us to restore our brethren when they have been overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1,2). It tells us to provoke one another to greater love and to greater works for Christ (Heb. 10:24). These instructions are based upon the fact that our brethren need us, and we ought to thank God that there is something that we can do to help our brethren along the way that leads to life. But, if we are not in fellowship with them, we can do no more for them than a doctor who resides upon a foreign continent when we have some physical malady that he could help eradicate.

E. Brotherly Love Should Constrain Us.

When young people love each other, you can't keep them apart. You don't have to command them to be together. Their love for each other has a way of just drawing them together. Men who love their homes find themselves at their homes as much as possible. This matter of brotherly love is a vital part of every Christian's life. Without it, one is not a Christian any more than he is a Christian without faith in Christ. This is the teaching of a number of passages, particularly of the book of I John. I say that if we love the brethren, we will be in fellowship with the brethren. Love for them will see to that. Therefore, if you have the problem of not desiring regular attendance with the brethren, you might well know that your love for the brethren is not what it ought to be. I believe this with all my heart. In this connection, I like that song that goes: "Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds Is like to that above. Before our Father's throne We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our arms are one, Our comforts and our cares. We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear; And often for each other flows The sympathizing tear." And let's not overlook that last stanza that pictures the brethren as they depart from each other until they get to meet again: "When we asunder part, It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart And hope to meet again." Yes, our love for each other will constrain us to be steadfast in our fellowship with each other.

F. For A More Effective Ministry To The Unsaved.

Christ could have turned us loose to win souls single-handed. But, he gave us brethren to work with us. He could have told us to go out to convert souls, but have given us no fellowship into which to bring them. That would not have been so easily accomplished. But, as it is, we can go out and deal with people and then bring them to the place of public assembly where they can hear the gospel de-

clared unto them. As the brother preaches and we sit by the side of those whom we have brought in, we can pray for their hearts to be open and honest. Thus, we work together to win souls to Christ. Besides, Paul usually had helpers with him in his evangelistic labors. Sometimes it was Barnabas; sometimes it was Silas; sometimes it was Timothy; and sometimes it was others. But, they labored together for the cause of Christ. And I am sure that a more effective ministry of the church to the unsaved can be accomplished where we are faithful in the fellowship of the church than can ever be accomplished by remaining at home aloof from Christians and at the same time trying to win another to Christ. He might well challenge our right to deal with him, seeing that we ourselves are not faithful to one of the simplest and most basic things of Christianity--the assembly of the saints.

G. That God May Be Glorified Through A Greater Church.

God would have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). He desires such first for their sakes, for He does love men (John 3:16). But, the more who are saved from sin and become the people of God, the more that God is glorified. If all men were Christians, letting their lights shine for God, how He would be glorified in the eyes of men (Matt. 5:16)! Part of the power of sin is its popularity. People do some of the things they do because it seems that everybody else is doing it, and how people do hate to be unpopular and out-of-step. When souls are converted, God is glorified (John 15:8), and the more souls that are actually won to Christ, the more that God is glorified. But, it is the "togetherness" of Christians that shows the world the actual numerical strength of those who have pledged themselves to Christ. What a joy it is to see a church lot full of cars where the gospel is being preached. The world sits up and begins to take notice. The work of God in such a place is bringing glory to God.

H. The Whole Plan Of God Is Set Up On The Fellowship Basis.

For instance there is the assembly of the saints to which the Bible bids us to be faithful in attending (Heb. 10:25). This certainly involves the church in fellowship. Then, as we discussed in our last study, God has placed elders in the church. They are the spiritual overseers into whose custody God has entrusted the Christians in their respective communities. They are to feed the flock (I Pet. 5:2). Surely they must know who is included in that flock, or they can never know whom to feed. This necessarily involves knowing who is in that fellowship. Again, the Bible speaks of Christians as "brethren" (Rom. 12:1; I Cor. 1:10; and many others). This is a term of relationship that involves both affection and responsibility. Where people are brethren, they are necessarily in fellowship, or something is wrong. Along this line, it is noteworthy that Peter speaks of the church as the "brotherhood" (I Pet. 2:17). If any word suggests fellowship, it is "brotherhood". We may not belong to any brotherhood with headquarters here on earth (like Boston, Salt Lake City, or Indianapolis), but if we are true Christians, we do belong to that brotherhood whose headquarters is in heaven.

We are come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12:22, 23) if we are Christians. Then consider the fact that God has placed disfellowship in His plan for the church (I Cor. 5:1-13; II Thess. 3:6-15; and others). One cannot be disfellowshipped for doing wrong if there is no such thing as the fellowship of the church. "Disfellowship" means to be denied fellowship. Surely, then, there is a fellowship from which the wicked is to be banned. Each one in that fellowship must personally commit himself or herself to it. The actual details as to how one goes about identifying himself with a local congregation is not set forth in the Scriptures, but such an action is necessarily involved. Otherwise, there could be no known circle of individuals from which the wicked could be banned in a disfellowship action. Some people today claim to be Christians, but they have not identified themselves with the people with whom they gather for public worship services. Such, in some ways, is evading a part of the plan of God. They want to be fellowshiped, yet they do not want to commit themselves to the fellowship. A congregation of people fit to worship with is fit to take fellowship with. If such a congregation is not fit to be in fellowship with, it is unfit to worship with. By thus acting, some people are able to shirk their financial responsibility. If they do wrong, they can say: "We are not under the elders of this congregation," and indeed they aren't, for they haven't placed themselves under their jurisdiction. In some ways, claiming to be Christians, they are at least violating something somewhere, and this cannot be denied. Yes, these and other matters of fellowship show the whole plan of God for the church involves the matter of fellowship.

1. The Sad Results Of 'Tramp' Religion.

As indicated above, some people choose to remain detached from the fellowship of any congregation. This Lord's day, they may attend services in one place, next Lord's day in another place, the following Lord's day in a third place, and the next Lord's day in no place at all, for they will be attending a birthday dinner of some relative. As such, they appear to people to be stronger than they are. All three of the above congregations were pleased to have them in their services and felt that they were fine people to be in their services when they were not members locally and when they drove considerable distances to be in their services. But, were they as strong as they are credited with being, they would be lined up locally in some given place if there were some local place worthy of being lined up with. "Tramp" religion may have a variety about it that is different, but aside from that, nothing can be said for it. It is much better to be in the harness for Christ in some given place and go to work--to have some definite local responsibilities, to be one that the brethren can count on, to be a part of some Bible class regularly, to be systematically fed by the same spiritual leaders who watch for one's soul, etc. "Tramp" religion has no more really to commend it than "tramp" living. People need the fellowship of the church, and while "tramp" religion might appear to be in fellowship with many Christians in many places, the truth of the matter is, such people are hardly

in actual fellowship anywhere. They are rolling stones that gather no moss. They are birds that flock with nobody. They are trees that are bringing little or no fruit to perfection.

II. We Must Be Careful Not To Get In With Wrong Fellowship.

What we have pointed out in the foregoing section of this study is in no way to suggest that we be in fellowship with just any local group that calls itself a church. But, remember that if we cannot conscientiously count ourselves in fellowship with some local church because of its unfitness, we should not consider it a fit people with whom to meet in religious services either. We do have a responsibility to investigate any people where we may be to determine whether we would want the Lord to come and find us religiously identified with them. If there is no people with whom we can conscientiously be identified, then our responsibility is to be detached from all such and to labor individually for Christ where we are to convert the nucleus of a true congregation of Christian people with whom we can be in fellowship.

Why do we say that we must be careful not to get in with wrong fellowship? Because:

A. We Are Corrupted By Evil Companionships.

The Revised Version plainly renders I Cor. 15:33 as follows:

"Evil companionships corrupt good morals."

And we know that that is true. We are affected by those with whom we are in fellowship, or we are deriving nothing from our fellowship with them. Therefore, we need to be careful about the fellowship of which we are a part. Along this line, one of the reasons why Paul called upon the Corinthian congregation to disfellowship the sinning brother was that a little leaven would in time leaven the whole lump (I Cor. 5:6). Many people have fallen from their steadfastness to Christ by the wrong kind of fellowship. That is what is wrong with having fellowship with the world, and that is what is wrong with having a wrong religious fellowship.

B. We Are Counted Partners By God With False Teachers Whom We Financially Support And Religiously Befriend.

Anything with which a person associates himself religiously will have some teaching or preaching. What is taught and preached will either be the truth of God's Word, or it will be untrue to the Scriptures. Sinners will either be told to do what the Bible says in order to become Christians, or they will be given a false way. The pattern of the church set forth in the Scriptures will either be upheld and followed, or it will be spoken against and transgressed in practice. In the days of the early church, Paul said there were many vain and unruly talkers and deceivers (Tit. 1:10). Would Paul have had the Christians of his day be fed Sunday after Sunday by such teachers? Would he have had them support such teaching with their offerings? Of course not. Back in Old Testament days, Peter reminded his readers, there were false prophets among the people,

and he went on to say that there would be false teachers come among the people of God (II Pet. 2:1). Would Peter have us go along with such false teachers? Would he have us treat them as true servants of God? Of course not. When Paul left Ephesus he foretold the coming of false teachers to that place (Acts 20:29). What attitude did he take concerning them? He had spent much time warning the people against them (Acts 20:31). What is a warning for? To be heeded. Should we heed the warnings of the inspired apostle? If we do, then it is plain to be seen that we will be on guard not to be taken in by false teachers and false teaching. But, some people say: "We are grounded in the faith. When the preacher brings out something that we know is wrong we don't let what he says affect us." But, you put your offerings in, don't you? Your silence gives sanction to what is being preached. Your religious befriending of such teachers actually involves you with them, according to the Bible. II John 10,11 says:

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house (as you would a true teacher), neither bid him God speed (as you would a true teacher): for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Be identified, therefore, with no people where the truth of your Christ is not being faithfully upheld.

C. We Are Subject To Divine Punishment For A Wrong Religious Affiliation.

In Old Testament times the people of God were taken captive by Babylon. Being separated from their temple, where their altar was and where God had recorded His name and to which the various tribes came for their annual feasts, they were unable to carry out the religion that God had given them by reason of the bondage brought upon them by Babylon. In time, the Persians replaced the Babylonians in power. They were friendly to God's people and permitted as many of them as desired to go back to Jerusalem to do so. But, some had become so accustomed to living in Babylon and Babylonish ways that they didn't desire to go to Jerusalem. This, of course, was not pleasing to God. Now with this in mind, let us go to the book of Revelation where we see a likeness to the above. Christ established His church, but in time, there arose another religious system and power that very much took over the scene. This false religion called "Babylon" in the book of Revelation enslaved those who would be and who looked upon themselves as the children of God. By introducing false religious practices, Babylon kept those in ward within her from worshipping God according to His true plan. When that spell was broken, God had this to say to those who would be His people:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

In olden days, if the Israelites refused to leave Babylon they would be counted a part of Babylon and as such would be punished right along with her. When people today affiliate themselves with some wrong religious group, they must share the fate of that group. This is what is wrong with being a part of any religious group that has been started by some man or group of men regardless of how sincere

those men might have been. Christ established His church in 30 A.D., but Catholicism grew up at a later date, and Protestantism came at a much later date, and most of the cult groups have a very recent origin. If I read in the Bible of God's condemnation upon lying or drunkenness, I want to be sure I am not guilty of such, and if I continue my reading and find that He likewise condemns false religion, I want to be just as sure that I am not connected with such in any way for that would involve me in the condemnation.

These things are so clear to those who read and believe the Bible in all of its teachings. Both parts of this study are very important: (1) be faithful in your fellowship with those who are the saints of God indeed; and (2) refuse to be in fellowship with anything that is displeasing to God.

Evangelism... the Work of the Whole Church

Were we to entitle this study, "Evangelism...the Work of the Church," it would be a Scriptural study showing that the work of the church is the evangelizing of the lost. Entitling it, "Evangelism...the Work of the Whole Church," we have the idea of evangelism being the church's work included, but we have included and emphasized the idea that this work falls upon the *whole* church--not merely a part of the church. That there is a need for the application of this subject, there can be no doubt in the minds of any who are spiritually-minded and know the facts of the case.

The whole plan of God, which we have been discussing for more than forty studies already, necessarily looks to the conversion of lost men, women, and young people. But, how shall these be converted? Will they get so tired of sin that they will of their own accord turn to God? Will they become so interested in God and eternity that they look into these matters by themselves? Or do they need help?

It is obvious that they need help. Just as God sent the Savior into the world to die for men that salvation might be provided, even so has Christ dispatched His church to the ends of the earth to proclaim salvation through His death, burial, and resurrection to every creature. It was necessary for Jesus to die if men were to be saved, and it is necessary for us who know Christ as our Savior to work in the winning of souls if they are to be saved. The evangelization of the lost of the whole world is a tremendous task, and Jesus rightly and wisely included every Christian in His plan to see that the job is accomplished. "To the law and to the testimony," then, to find out what He has called upon each of us to do.

I. Every Christian Has His Place In The Evangelization Of The World.

It almost seems wrong--at least, unnecessary--to have to convince those who have named the name of Christ that they have to help in the work of winning souls. Have you ever walked down the corridor of a hospital and heard the agonizing moans and groans of those who are suffering? You might not know them personally, but it is hard to imagine a man who if he knew how to relieve their suffering and permit them to go to their homes in sound health would not be glad to do so. That is why I say it almost seems wrong to spend time trying to convince people that it is their duty to win souls. They should be glad they have the privilege!

Let us now look at what each Christian is to do.

A. Evangelists.

When we speak of "evangelists", we are not using that term in the sense which it is commonly used today, but in the sense that it is used in the Bible. In modern usage, the term "evangelist" designates a preacher who merely conducts evangelistic meetings of a few nights or a few weeks' duration. If he ceases conducting such meetings to work with some weak church that needs his help, he is no longer engaged in evangelistic work, according to modern usage. In the Bible, the term "evangelist" was used to designate those preachers who were charged with carrying the gospel to the lost world and to establish and strengthen churches. They are distinguished from "pastors" or "elders", who were charged to care for the local work of which they themselves are a part.

It is obvious from the very term "evangelists" that their work is evangelism. There is a definite work that evangelists are supposed to do, for Paul wrote to Timothy:

"Do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5)

A study of the books I and II Timothy and Titus (which were written to evangelists) and a study of the life of Paul (who was an evangelist) as set forth in Acts and his epistles will furnish one with authentic Biblical material as to what the work of evangelists is. They pushed the gospel into new places (such as Paul on his various journeys). They led sinners to Christ (such as Philip's work accomplished). They set congregations into order by working with them until they were ready to carry on under the oversight of qualified local men set over them as elders (see Paul's instructions to Titus in Tit. 1:5 and other similar passages). They kept up contact with various congregations, even ministering the Word to them from time to time (see Paul's connection with the church at Antioch). They committed the Word to faithful men who would be able to teach and preach it to others (see Paul's instruction to Timothy in II Tim. 2:2).

There was a great need for the office of the evangelist in the beginning of Christianity, and because there were those who faithfully filled that office, Christianity spread far and wide across the Roman Empire. Today, there is likewise a great need for faithful men to fill that office to the glory of God and the outreach of the gospel. But, with

so many elders all over the country sitting down on the job, nearly all the preachers have settled down to the point of being nothing but one-man pastors over the churches so that new fields are not being entered with any degree of rapidity, for there is nobody free to go into those fields. Not until the concept of the Biblical evangelist is again incorporated into the thought of those who desire to be a Biblical people will evangelism again march.

B. Elders.

A former study was devoted to the subject of the elders, so no detailed study of that subject will be entered into here. But, one who studied that lesson may ask: "I thought the work of the elders had to do with caring for those converted--not with bringing in the lost." Basically, that is true--they are the shepherds of the flock--but don't overlook this fact: they are actually busy building up each convert in Christ who in turn will become a soul winner for Jesus. In this way, the more faithfully and successfully they do their work, the more workers Christ will have in each field to go forth winning men, women, and young people to Christ. In this way, the work of the elders does have to do with the work of evangelism.

C. Members.

Members of the church are just as important to the accomplishment of the work of the church as soldiers are to the winning of a war. They are just as necessary to the church's work as laborers are to a construction company's job. And the Bible so recognizes their responsibilities. Writing to members of the body of Christ living at Ephesus, Paul wrote:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 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. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:11-17).

Any concept of Christianity that does not have each Christian a soldier in the Lord's army is not a true-to-the-Bible concept. Oh so many today have the erroneous concept, and that accounts for the fact that so little is being accomplished compared to what could be accomplished with the actual participation of the great group now stored away in "moth-balls". Jesus when here on earth said, "Come," to those who needed His help (Matt. 11:28). Now that He has gone back to heaven, He is saying, "Come," through others. In this connection, Rev. 22:17 says:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

To those of us who value the precedent of the early

church as an expression of what Christ would have the church always to be, there is a lesson in soul winning to be learned from the dispersed Jerusalem church. Persecution, which arose following the martyrdom of Stephen, scattered the Jerusalem congregation except the apostles (the preachers) (Acts 8:1). Now, notice what verse 4 of that chapter says concerning these dispersed or scattered members:

"And they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."

The plan of Christ includes personal work on the part of the members. The love for unsaved people prompts that work. The will of Christ demands it. If we would be Christians, we have the matter already settled for us as to whether we are going to be soul winners. Yet, it is one of the most neglected fields of Christian living today. If you do not think so, stand back and watch how few do anything in the course of a week to win anybody to Christ. If you don't think so, turn preacher and preach upon soul winning. People will show during the message and will tell their delinquency after the message is over. They will say: "There's one place that I really fall down;" or, "Personal work has always been hard for me," which is about tantamount to saying the person has not been doing it; or, "A sermon like that always convicts me;" or, "I'd like to learn how to do personal work," which again is a dead give away that the person has been doing nothing in that field for the Master. Seldom do I preach on that subject in revival meetings but what people come forward to ask the prayers of the saints in their behalf and to seek personal counsel as to how to work for Christ, and those who come are usually among the best members. This is revealing!

Yes, if many preachers are failing to evangelize, and if many elders are failing to pastor, it is equally true that many members are failing to soul win.

II. These Also Relate To Evangelism.

In no way to detract from what has just been said and surely in no way to ease the sting of those who have been failing to soul win, we wish to discuss a few additional things which also enter into the whole church's work of evangelism. In addition to preaching the gospel, shepherding the church and developing the members into soul winners, and actually doing personal work, consider the following as they relate to the salvation of souls.

A. Rearing Children The Right Way Relates To Evangelism.

Children reared right will accept Christ as Savior. In a sense, this is long-range evangelism from the standpoint of the time involved on the part of the parents. But, what could possibly be more rewarding? But, parents may be disappointed in the outcome of their children religiously if they themselves do not put the church before everything else, if they do not show a consistent Christian life before their children everyday, and if they do not exercise that carefulness so necessary in rearing them.

I care not how good a sermon a preacher may preach, if

he has failed to bring his own children to Christ, he has failed. Giving attention to everybody else and their needs, he has neglected his own children and their needs. Parents who cannot get their children to attend all the church services willingly are or have failed somewhere, and they are bound to have heart-ache after heart-ache over them. In our concern, then, for souls, let us not neglect the field that is so close to us--that of our own children.

B. Giving Relates To Evangelism.

Someone has said, "Salvation is free, but it costs money to pipe it to others," and it does. In the divine program, those lives that are set apart from earthly pursuits and vocational jobs to preach the gospel are to have their living provided:

"Even so has the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:13).

More than once with reference to those giving their lives to preaching and teaching does the Bible say:

"The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7; Matt. 10:10; 1 Tim. 5:17,18).

In all dispensations, men of God have brought their tithes and offerings to God, which in turn have been given to those who have devoted themselves to the special service of God to the extent that they did not have time to provide their own living without neglecting the spiritual work they were doing. There are those who argue that God does not demand tithes and offerings today, and there are surely plenty of people who do not bring them. But, 1 Cor. 9, Heb. 7, and other sections of the Scripture make it evident that God does expect us to be faithful in our tithes and offerings.

Those who do not bring their finances in God's way are certainly guilty of hindering evangelism today. People who are earning good money feel relieved that their abilities may be lacking from the preaching standpoint, but what about their financial abilities? Where men would steal their lives from God's service if they were so gifted, you can be reasonably sure that they will also steal financially from God. Yes, every member can help with the evangelistic program of the church by being a Bible giver. When one contributes his money, he is actually helping the church carry out its program of evangelism if the church is busy at the Lord's program of evangelism.

C. Prayer Relates To Evangelism.

Prayer can help in evangelism at least three ways: (1) Christians can pray for those who are preaching the gospel (Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 4:3,4; II Thess. 3:1,2); (2) Christians can pray for more laborers to be raised up for the gospel harvest (Matt. 9:37,38); and (3) Christians can pray for those whom they are laboring to win to Christ (Rom. 10:1). When we read the New Testament story of early evangelism, we notice that preaching the Word and praying went right together (Acts 6:4). Wherever there is real evangelistic effort and a true compassion for the lost, I do not believe that you can keep the workers from praying! Honest, sincere prayer will lead people to work for the salvation of

the lost, and laboring to win the lost will cause them to pray more and more. This is the universal experience of those now busy in the work of Christ,

D. Living The Right Kind Of Life Relates To Evangelism.

There are a number of passages that show this to be true. I Pet. 3:1,2 shows that wives may be instrumental in leading their husbands to Christ by the lives they live before them. If this would be true of wives and husbands, the same thing would be true in other realms and relationships. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus showed that if His followers let their lights shine before men by doing good, it would have a spiritual effect upon others (Matt. 5:16). We do know that people form their opinion of Christianity by the lives of those who claim to be a part of it, and they make up their minds whether they want to be a part of it on the same basis. The world watches the lives of those in the church very carefully. If their lives are good, it will have an effect upon the world for good, but if they are bad, it will be a direct barrier to evangelizing the lost. A person doesn't work even one full day in contacting people for Christ but what the inconsistent life of someone in the church is thrown up to him. It is no wonder that Paul said to the Philippians to let their lives be only as it was becoming to the gospel (Phil. 1:27). It is noteworthy that Paul connected letting their lights shine with their holding forth the Word:

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 1:14-16).

The lives of the early converts met the approval of the onlookers, and that fact is connected in Acts 2:47 with the daily additions to the church:

"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

So, the good lives of the saints is an evangelistic factor, and the importance of it cannot be overlooked nor over-emphasized.

As we bring this study to a close, there are a number of thoughts that should be pointed out. Nothing is so dear to the heart of God as the winning of the lost. That is why He sent Jesus into the world. That is why He has sent forth the church with the orders found in the great commission. That is why He gave evangelists and why He has called every Christian to be a soul winner. There is a great need today for us to pray for more evangelists of the gospel to be raised up. There is a great need for evangelists to commit the Word to many more faithful men who will be able to teach others also. There is a great need for the elders to develop every member into a soul winner. There is surely a great need for the individual members to do the work committed to them and for the prevailing practice of letting one man (a preacher) do all the personal work and all the shepherding of the flock that gets done to be abandoned and replaced by a whole church

on fire for God going forth to win the lost to their Christ. If our thoughts direct our lives--and they do--then we can well "Think on these things"!

The Lord's Supper is Divinely Important

I can think of no better way to begin this study than to ask you this question: "What do you think of the Lord's supper?" While some have divergent thoughts about it and some unscriptural views of it, one of the great tragedies is that the average religious person has no particular thoughts or view concerning it. If sectarianism has failed to instruct those who look to it for teaching, it has failed to give certainty of understanding on the subject under consideration. It is a subject enshrouded by both ignorance and mystery to far too many. Because they do not understand it and suppose it to be too sacred to talk about, many never ask questions to become informed concerning it.

I have long appreciated studying and preaching upon this subject, and to partake of it is a sacred privilege that I do not intend to neglect for anything else from now until the time that I die or Jesus comes (whichever happens first). It is my intention to share with you the benefit of some of my studies upon this subject.

I. The Importance Of The Lord's Supper Is Seen In Its Symbolic Commemoration.

A. God Is A God Who Commemorates Great Events With Observances And Memorials.

That is a noteworthy fact concerning our God. After sparing the firstborn among the Hebrews when visiting the twelfth plague upon the Egyptians, God saw to it that His mercy upon them and His sparing of the firstborn be remembered from generation to generation. Hence, the feast of Passover. For a discussion of the Passover, you are referred to study 19 in this series, "The Three Great Jewish Feasts." A pot of manna from the Wilderness Period of Old Testament history was preserved in the ark of the covenant so that all succeeding generations might know of God's daily goodness upon their forefathers. Aaron's rod that budded when a rebellion was made against his authority as the high priest of God was likewise placed in the ark of covenant as a reminder that God had chosen Aaron and his offspring to offer the sacrifices and perform the other priestly duties. When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, God had twelve stones from the river bed where the priests stood who held the ark of the covenant erected on the western side of the Jordan so that in times to come when the children would ask the meaning of those

stones, the parents could tell them of God's mighty hand which gave them entrance to the land of Canaan. Baptism, in its form of immersion into and emersion from the water, not only has its all-important saving aspect, but it also has a symbolic function--that of depicting to the world the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to a lost and dying world.

B. The Lord's Supper Commemorates The Crucifixion.

In I Cor. 11:23-26, we read:

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Three facts in the above quotation show that the Lord's supper commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus: (1) Notice that He said, "This do in remembrance of me." This could not be clearer. Christ who gave this ordinance had in mind the commemorative element. To eat of the bread and drink of the cup without having the death of Jesus in our minds is to partake of the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner, which amounts to our being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (I Cor. 11:27). (2) Proof that the particular thing that we are to remember about Jesus when partaking is His crucifixion. This is seen from the fact that He selected bread (emblematic of His body) and the cup (emblematic of His blood) as the elements of the Lord's supper. In the above passage, He included the comment that these were involved in His death for our sins. (3) Just as a monument proclaims important facts concerning the one whom it commemorates, so our spreading the table and partaking of the emblems proclaims week by week the death of Christ. This is also set forth in the above passage.

Our subject is: "The Lord's supper is Divinely Important." I ask you this: Is the death of Christ divinely important? And the answer comes back immediately: "Yes, for He died for our sins, and apart from that death, there could be no salvation." Then, whatever Jesus chose to commemorate that death, and whatever proclaims that death is not to be counted unimportant by men. In other words, what God has made important, let not man count unimportant!

Remembering His death and sufferings for us should renew our love for Christ each time that we partake of it. Such communion with Him should tend to keep us from sin and help us with power to live the overcoming life. And if humility is an important virtue--and it is--surely bowing humbly at the feet of Christ as we partake of the bread and cup should take every vestige of proud and self-righteousness out of us. Such blessings that come into our lives through this solemn commemoration also contribute to make the Lord's supper divinely important.

II. The Importance Of The Lord's Supper Is Seen From The Standpoint Of Communion.

A. It Is A Communion Of The Body And Blood Of Christ.

I Cor. 10:16 says:

"The cup of blessing which we bless (referring to the Lord's supper), is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we brake, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

This verse plainly shows that the Lord's supper is a communion of the body and blood of Jesus. It is a commemoration yes, but it is not confined to the commemorative aspect. In the Lord's supper, one communes, shares in, partakes of, fellowships with and in the body and blood of Jesus. This is the plain teaching of I Cor. 10:16, and I am neither able nor desirous of denying it. This is one of the reasons why I don't want to miss the Lord's supper at anytime. This is one of the reasons why it is dangerous to partake of the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner. Some may contend that there is absolutely no connection between the Lord's supper and the forgiveness of sins and salvation, but the Bible does not uphold that idea. The Bible shows that the Lord's supper brings us again and again in contact with the blood of Christ, and what do we receive through the blood of Christ but the forgiveness of sins and salvation? If we may rightly show from Rom. 6:3 that a sinner contacts the blood of Christ in baptism because he is baptized into Christ's death (where His blood was shed), then we can surely show that a Christian enjoys contact with the blood of Christ through the Lord's supper, for it is a communion of the body and the blood of Christ.

While there are those who deny that John 6:53,54 has anything to do with the Lord's supper, I do not see how language could be much clearer. Notice that passage:

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

In the above passage, Jesus talks about people eating His flesh and drinking His blood. This is *exactly* the language of the Lord's supper:

"Take, eat; this is my body...Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood" (Matt. 26:26-28).

If one doesn't eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood in the Lord's supper, then he never does. But, all who would have life must do that according to Jesus' teaching in John 6:53. I do not believe that the Lord's supper alone brings remission of a Christian's sins any more than baptism alone brings remission of an alien sinner's sins, yet I do not believe that a Christian has the forgiveness of his sins without the Lord's supper any more than I believe a sinner has the remission of his sins without baptism! Brethren, this is safe ground to take, for it is Biblical ground! That's why people should not minimize the importance of the Lord's supper. That's why they should always be present for it. That's why they should partake

in a self-examining, confessing, penitent, Christ-remembering way.

Has the devil attacked the ordinance of baptism? Indeed, he has. He wants to keep unsuspecting sinners away from the blood of baptism to be found when one is baptized. Has the devil attacked the ordinance of the Lord's supper? Indeed, he has. He wants to keep those who have started out to be God's people away from the blood of Christ shed for their sins. We could expect the devil to fight both baptism and the Lord's supper, and he has done it through the years. Denominationalism belittles baptism, keeps people ignorant of the Bible teaching concerning it, and misteaches it, and it is equally clear that denominationalism has not given the Lord's supper the place that it had in the early church.

Yes, the Lord's supper is divinely important.

B. It Is A Communion With Christ Himself.

In Matt. 26:29, Jesus said:

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Jesus was present with His disciples when He instituted the Lord's supper. He took His own cup from which He had drunk during the supper and told them all to drink of it. No doubt, the bread was likewise. In other words, both they and He had eaten and drunk of the bread and the cup upon that occasion. But, He said He would not do this with them any more until it became fulfilled in the kingdom. It became fulfilled in the kingdom in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Notice from the above passage that when it became fulfilled in the kingdom, Jesus would be there with His followers drinking with them. This is why it is so often referred to as "communion". It is a personal communion with Jesus as we go to Him and He comes to us and we commune together as Redeemer and redeemed. The fact that all who love Christ want the closest possible walk with Him and communion with Him argues for the importance of the Lord's supper that brings us into spiritual communion with Him.

III. The Importance Of The Lord's Supper Is Seen In The Great Place It Occupies In The Bible.

A. Consider Luke 22:29,30.

Jesus speaking, that passage reads:

"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Here we have three things: (1) the kingdom, the church; (2) the apostles exercising apostolic authority over that kingdom, which is going on right now; and (3) there would be a table in Christ's kingdom where they would eat and drink. What table would that be? The Lord's table, of course. When Jesus said He was appointing them a kingdom where they would get to eat and drink at His table, does it not suggest itself to your mind that the Lord's supper must have been much more important (and to be

observed with a good bit more frequency) than it is now considered by many people? Had Jesus said, "I appoint unto you a kingdom that ye may preach in my kingdom," or, "I appoint unto you a kingdom that ye may pray in my kingdom," we would have understood that preaching or praying would be important. Well, when Jesus said He was appointing unto them a kingdom that they might eat and drink at His table in His kingdom, let us conclude as we should that the Lord's supper is divinely important!

B. Consider Its Prefigurement By The Table Of Shewbread.

According to Heb. 9, the Old Testament tabernacle prefigured the religion of Christ. The holy of holies was a type of heaven--the place into which the high priest went for atonement. The holy place was the place in which the common priests served day by day, and since we Christians are the priesthood under Christ (our high priest), the holy place was a type of the church in which we now serve. This position is held generally among Bible students. As you possibly recall, there were but three pieces of furniture in the holy place of the tabernacle: (1) the table of shewbread, (2) the altar of incense, and (3) the golden candlestick. There is little doubt in anybody's mind but what the table of shewbread prefigured the Lord's supper. If that be true, who can say that the Lord's supper is not divinely important when it was one of the three things prefigured about all of Christianity?

C. Consider Acts 2:42.

That verse which describes the earliest activities of the first converts in this dispensation reads:

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

This verse says the early converts continued steadfastly in four things: (1) the apostles' doctrine, (2) fellowship, (3) the breaking of bread, and (4) prayers. Is preaching important? Is fellowship? Is prayer? Well, then so is the breaking of bread (the Lord's supper). But, Sunday after Sunday, Protestant bodies come together and have preaching, fellowship, and prayer, but only once a month or once a quarter or once a year do they break bread (some do it with one frequency, and some with another frequency). But, the point is, they do not give the Lord's supper the important place in their programs that the early church did. When I read the Lord's supper cast right alongside preaching, fellowship and prayer in Acts 2:42, I am made to realize that the Lord's supper is divinely important.

D. Consider Acts 20:7.

Paul had been in Troas for several days. What he did on the days preceding the first day of the week, we are not told. But, he met with the brethren upon the first day of the week, for it was upon that day that they customarily assembled for the breaking of bread. While thus congregated, he took the opportunity to preach to them. Listen to that passage:

"Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."

Grammatically speaking, the main clause of that verse says that Paul preached unto them on the first day of the week. The dependent or subordinate clause of that verse is thrown in to tell us something about the first day of the week. What does it tell us about that day? That the disciples came together upon that day of the week to break bread! And to this, all the history (both secular and ecclesiastical) of the first century and first centuries of Christianity agree that the early church came together to partake of the Lord's supper every Lord's day. But, I would have you notice that Acts 20:7 does not say that the disciples came together on that day to hear Paul preach, but to break bread, and since he was present, they had him preach. Grammatically, the language of Acts 20:7 demands that we accept the fact that the central purpose of their Lord's day assembly was to break bread.

Several years ago, a sectarian preacher called at the place where an evangelist was staying while in town conducting a revival meeting. He went over in an attitude of belligerence to contend with the evangelist for some of the things he was preaching. Being a stocky-built man, he rapped vigorously on the door of the house trailer. Calmly, the evangelist came to the door. With robust feeling, the caller identified himself. Undisturbed, the evangelist said, "Fine, come right on in." Before the caller could start anything, the evangelist asked him how often they took up the offering. "Every week," the calling preacher replied. "And how often do you have the Lord's supper?" the evangelist asked. "Once a month," he said. "Why do you take up the offering every week, but serve the Lord's supper only once a month?" he continued. The caller had been using I Cor. 16:2 for his authority for weekly offering, but was disregarding Acts 20:7 which teaches weekly communion. With this beginning, the evangelist continued to show his caller many other things from the Bible, which resulted in the caller abandoning his sectarian ministry and lining up with the evangelist whom he had come to work over.

Here is a statement I want you to get. Hear it. Examine it. Check to see if it is correct. You will find that it is. Here it is: There is not one Scripture that argues for a weekly gathering of the church that does not also argue for a weekly observance of the Lord's supper. We know that the early church did gather every week. History abounds with references to that fact. Two passages of Scripture indicate it: Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:2. But, both of them show that the Lord's supper was served every Lord's day. If Acts 20:7 argues for church attendance, it surely argues for observing the Lord's supper when assembled. I Cor. 16:2 shows that the Corinthian church came together upon the first day of the week, and I Cor. 11 shows that they came together to observe the Lord's supper, though the way they had perverted it, it was hardly right to call it the Lord's supper. Paul, in that chapter, set about to tell them again how to observe the Lord's supper, and he closed by telling them when they came together to eat what to do. Remember that there are only two passages that bear directly upon the matter of weekly assembly, but both of them argue for weekly communion.

There are so many things that can be said upon the subject of the Lord's supper, but I believe we have presented enough to prove our proposition; namely, that the Lord's supper is divinely important. Let us then value the Lord's supper. Let us be present each week for it. Let us partake of it in a worthy manner. And let us receive the blessings through it that Christ intended for us to receive when He instituted it.

Praise and Prayer

I hope you will find this one of the most profitable studies in this entire series. If it isn't, it isn't the subject's fault, for it is a wonderful subject. It is a subject that should be dear to the heart of every saint, and it is one with which the pages of the Bible abound. May the Lord bless the study to your heart and life. Stop and pray for a blessing from the study ahead before proceeding.

Let us first of all clear the ground by distinguishing between praise and prayer. Both are utterances of the lips, but praise of the Lord may be directed to the people as well as to God while prayer is directed to God alone. Furthermore, praise is speaking of the goodness of the Lord while prayer is petitioning God for our needs. In praise, we either thank the Lord or speak of His goodness upon us to our fellowmen. In prayer, we call upon the name of the Lord for the things we desire of Him. Praise and prayer rightly go together, and while they are to be distinguished from each other, they are not to be separated. We should call upon God in prayer, but we should express our thanksgiving to Him while doing it:

"In everything by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

I. A Consideration Of Praise.

A. The Bible Shows That All Blessings Come From God.

Since the goodness of God is the foundation for praising God, let us notice what the Bible says about the source of our blessings. Jas. 1:17 says:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."

In harmony with this verse, the Doxology begins: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Another well known song speaks of God as "Thou fount of every blessing", and truly, He is!

B. God Has Been Very Good To Mankind.

It is wicked for people to talk as if they were not blest. God has not dealt with us according to our deservings. God loves, though His love is not always recognized and returned. God blesses materially and with the privilege of

salvation even though men do not deserve such treatment:

"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).

Psa. 33:5 says:

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."

Truly, it is. Everywhere we cast our eyes, we behold the goodness of God in some way in behalf of man. Every day is another day of many blessings from Him. Psa. 68:19 says:

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."

Again, the Psalmist said:

"Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

C. Man Should Be Thankful For All These Blessings.

God has a right to expect man to recognize Him as the source of his blessings. Psa. 29:2 says:

"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name."

Yes, it is *due* Him! When David thought of the goodness of God upon him, he said:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:1-5).

Paul after bidding the Colossian Christians to let the peace of God rule in their hearts, added this brief but meaningful instruction:

"And be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15).

People sing, "God bless America." This He has surely done, but it is time that many living in America turn to Him and thank Him for all the blessings that He has given. so many today are like nine-tenths of that group of lepers whom Jesus healed! Nine of the ten healed did not return to give God the glory (Luke 17:12-18). The blessings of God are to be received with thanksgiving (I Tim. 4:4)--not just received!

D. Our Thankfulness Should Be Expressed.

A dog will many times bark for his food. When he sees you bringing it, he will frisk around, showing how glad he is to see you. As you pour the food into his pan, he will stand there wagging his tail in appreciation. And he will be very faithful to you, doing whatever he can for you. For all the blessings that God gives us, we should do more than partake of them--we should express our thankfulness for them:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all the

people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth!" (Psa. 96:1-9).

No less than four times in the single chapter of Psa. 107 do we read these touching words of exclamation:

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (verses 8, 15, 21, and 31).

An Old Testament prophecy that looked toward the earthly life of Jesus showed that He would not neglect praising the Father:

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Psa. 22:22 and Heb. 2:12).

The Psalmist also said:

"I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings" (Psa. 77:11,12).

We have a song that says: "Praise Him, praise Him, Jesus our blessed redeemer. Sing, O earth, His wonderful love proclaim." And the words of the chorus go: "Tell of His excellent greatness." This is exactly what the apostles were doing on the day of Pentecost when they confounded the multitudes with their speaking in so many different languages:

"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11).

These are the words of the confounded multitude.

Man's gratitude to God can be expressed in a number of ways. It can be done by singing. In spite of the miseries in which they were found, Paul and Silas sang praises to God in the darkness of the midnight hour in that old jail in Philippi (Acts 16:25). So, one can praise God in song. But, man can also express his thankfulness by telling God about it. Heb. 13:15 says that we should offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually and explains by saying that it is talking about the fruit of our lips that rises in thanksgiving to His holy name. In every prayer we pray, intersperse statements of thanksgiving to God. But, we also express our praise of God by praising Him to our fellowmen. Psa. 107:2 says that the redeemed of the Lord should say so. We should not be ashamed to speak for Christ. There is a song in the Stamps-Baxter hymnal that says: "I'm not ashamed to own that Jesus came and died on Calvary, That by his blessed, free atonement He prepared a way for me; And fixed it so that I from bondage might be free. O praise the Lord, I'm not ashamed." And the chorus reads: "I'm not ashamed to speak for Jesus; I'm not ashamed to praise His name; I'm not ashamed to own His blessings. O praise the Lord, I'm not ashamed." And we had better not be ashamed of Him either! But, let us not overlook the fact that we can show our gratitude through the lives that we live and the deeds of devotion that we do. Luke 7 tells us of a woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, dried them with her

hair, kissed them, and anointed them with ointment. Why did she do that? Because she was grateful for Christ's mercy upon her many sins. This was an act of devotion upon her part. It goes to show again that if we are grateful, we will show it as well as talk it.

II. A Consideration Of Prayer.

A. Prayer Is Not Limited To New Testament Times.

In Old Testament times, they had no Lord's supper nor did they have baptism. But, they did have prayer. David and Daniel were both great men of prayer. The praying of Elijah is recalled, and Hannah is famous for her prayer for a son. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the men of God of the Old Testament were men of prayer. We can profitably study their lives with reference to prayer and be taught better how to pray, why pray, and the assurances that God will answer prayer.

B. Prayer Is Based Upon Man's Need And The Goodness Of God To Supply That Need.

Man is not as independent as he may act at times. Though it is in God that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28), you would not think so by observing the way many go along without acknowledging Him in their lives. Men may sometimes act like they owned the whole world when the truth of the matter is they brought nothing when they came into the world, and they will carry nothing out when they depart. Man does have needs. "I need Thee ev'ry hour" is so true. This is one part of the foundation of prayer. But, what good would it do to pray even out of a desperate feeling of need if God was not good to hear and to answer? Would we be heard for our much speaking? Would words to a heartless God help? But, God is good, and He has promised to answer the believing prayers of His children:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7:7-11).

Other wonderful promises concerning prayer are:

"Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22); "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14,15); "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

C. Prayer Should Be A Part Of Every Day Of Life.

David took time to pray. *Psa. 55:17* says:

"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray."

Daniel did likewise. You will remember how his enemies conspired against him by getting the king to sign a decree that no person should petition any person or god for thirty

days except the king himself. What did Daniel do? He proceed with life as usual, praying three times a day:

"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, AS HE DID AFORETIME" (Dan. 6:10).

Some people might have quit praying when such a decree was signed. Others who had not been faithful in praying previously might have even dared to pray to prove their loyalty to God. But, the Scripture says that Daniel went right ahead praying three times a day "as he did aforetime". In other words, the decree had not affected him one way or another. It is said of the early church that the members continued steadfastly in prayer (Acts 2:42). Christians are exhorted to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), to continue instant in prayer (Rom. 12:12), and to pray always (Eph. 6:18). Jesus taught His disciples to pray for their "daily"--not "weekly", not "monthly"--bread (Matt. 6:11). And by the time that one prays the life of prayer set forth in the Bible--not only for himself, but for rulers, for evangelists of the gospel, for more laborers to be raised up, for the lost, for brethren in Christ, and for enemies--it must be something that he work into every day of his life, or he will not carry out the Bible instructions with reference to prayer. Many today are failing in prayer because they do not make prayer a part of their daily lives. Prayer is a great divider. It draws a line between those who are really Christians and those who aren't. A person may attend church services without being a Christian, but if he isn't trying earnestly to serve the Lord, he won't pray!

D. Jas. 5:16 Is A Good Digest Of God's Promises With Reference To Prayer.

That verse reads:

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Notice several things:

(1) God has not promised to answer everybody's prayer--just the righteous man's prayer.

This is taught elsewhere in the Bible also. *1 Pet. 3:12* says:

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Psa. 66:18 says:

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Isa. 59:1,2 says:

"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

(2) God has not promised to answer every prayer--just the fervent prayer.

Jesus prayed earnestly (Luke 22:44). So did Elijah

(Jas. 5:17). So did Epaphras (Col. 4:12). So did Hannah (I Sam. 1:10). And so should we. Fervent prayer is sincere prayer. It is that which arises out of the heart. It is that which God is pleased to answer. It is that which He knows represents our sincere desires. That is the kind of prayer He has promised to answer.

(3) *God has not promised that prayer will do everything--He said it will avail much.*

And it will! Read the Bible record of men who prayed. See the wonderful results of prayer. Consider the fact that we do not have many things because we have not asked for them (Jas. 4:2). Prayer will not do everything--even as baptisms will not do everything. But, it is essential--even as baptism is. No one can be well pleasing to God who does not believe that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6), and if we believe God rewards such, we are going to be found among that number who diligently seeks Him in prayer! Prayer availeth much!

E. Prayer Should Bring Us Joy.

Jesus said to His disciples:

"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

What a joy it is to take our loved ones to the Lord in prayer! What a joy it is to remember those in prayer from whom we may be separated by many hundreds of miles! What a joy it is to go to God in prayer, believing that we shall receive the things we ask of Him! People enjoy sitting down with a Sears and Roebuck catalog picking out what they want, filling out the order blank, and mailing it in. Why? Because they expect the order to be filled. In the same way, it is a joy to express our desires to God in prayer with the assurance that they will be granted if they ought to be. The song writer has called the time of prayer "sweet hour of prayer". Another song joins in pointing out the joy of prayer: "Oh the pure delight of a single hour that before Thy throne I spend!" And truly it is a joy. Another song writer has stated it like this: "O how praying rests the weary! Prayer will change the night to day. So, when life seems dark and dreary, don't forget to pray."

F. Jesus Has Set Us A Fine Example Of Prayer.

God was pleased with everything Jesus did. And He will surely be pleased with us if we do as He did. Prayer is no exception. He prayed, and so are we to pray. He excluded Himself from the multitude (and even from His disciples) in order to pray (Matt. 14:22,23), and so should we (Matt. 6:6). A full run-down of the gospel records would reveal the great place that prayer played in the life of Jesus and what prayer meant to Him, and if the record of our lives were made known to the people, it should show the same things of us who are Christians.

It is truly hard to find a quitting place when discussing the subjects of praise and prayer. But, let us say briefly, but emphatically, in closing: let us all do more of both. We should! We need to! And God will bless us if we will!

Christianity's Distinguishing Characteristic

Love is surely Christianity's distinguishing characteristic. Remove from the Bible the fact of God's love for us, and there would be no Old Testament recording God's dealings with and working through a chosen people to bring a Savior into the world. Remove the idea that Christians are to love one another and a lost, unevangelized world as well as God, and there would be no New Testament outlining the various items of Christian living, for without love, they would not be carried out. The importance of love, then, is very evident.

But, our title suggests that love is a distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, and it is. All the other religions of the world seemingly knew only of a wrathful, vengeful God, who did not love them, but who might be appeased by their various sacrifices--sometimes even using their children as sacrifices. Christianity does not destroy the idea of a wrathful, vengeful God, but it does show that He is such a God only to those who refuse to obey and serve Him, and going beyond that single notion about God, Christianity revealed another side of God--that of love for lost, fallen mankind, who delights in mercy. While it is true that some of those polytheistic religions included a god of love in their many gods, he was more of a god of sensual lust than anything else. If we might so say, he was more "Hollywood" than "holy". Furthermore, Christianity came into a cruel world of torturings, hatred, distrust, selfishness, and war, and taught a different standard--that of love for each other. Though Christianity has not triumphed over every attitude and sin in people's lives, wherever Christianity has gone, civilization has become the by-product among even those who have not personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. Relatively speaking, savagery and cruelties have disappeared in civilized lands. Love for the other person removes selfishness, and being loved by another truly causes us to trust him. Surely, if the love of God were in men's hearts, there could be no such thing as war disgracing the world, for if men loved their neighbors as themselves, they could not start a war against them, and if they did, if those whom they opposed loved their enemies, they wouldn't fight back. Confucius might have said, "Don't do unto others what you would not have them do to you," but it took Christ to give the higher law--the new commandment of an active, fervent, sincere love that would do unto others as we would have them do to us (Matt. 7:12), a love that would lay down our lives for others (John 15:12,13). Jesus could truly say that His followers would be known by the great love that they would show for each other (John 13:35). It has been re-

corded for us in profane history of the first century of Christianity concerning the Christians' love for each other: "Behold, how they love one another!"

Surely, Christianity was unique in its teachings of loving even one's enemies. Revenge and retaliation were all that was known until Jesus came. Jesus taught to love one's enemies (Matt. 5:44). This is still hard for many to grasp and accept, but Christ taught it, and those who follow Him practice it. Wherever this has been practiced, those beholding it have been astonished. The Romans, who so bitterly persecuted and martyred the early Christians, could not understand why Christians accepted their torturings and martyrdoms without retaliations. This devotion to their Master and their strict obedience to His teachings were in time going to make inroads into Rome that preaching alone never did.

Love is a great subject, but like all other subjects, it has received its share of abuse. Some preachers and people do nothing but "mouth" love all the time. They make it an insipid, sissified sounding thing that it has little appeal and no power in it. Some interpret love as meaning compromise. They never oppose anything or anybody no matter how evil under the guise of love. But, such is not love, according to the Bible. By tolerating every kind of falsehood in the name of religion and soft-pedaling concerning every sin of man, they think they really love people. But, according to the Bible, that is not love. Love rejoices in the truth; love rejoices not in iniquity (I Cor. 13:6). Bible love stands for the way of God and opposes every false way (Psa. 119:127,128). Their misconception of love is noticed in their criticism of gospel preachers as having no love in their hearts for their forthright preaching of God's Word. But, one Bible characteristic or virtue is not at war or variance with another Bible characteristic. Preaching the Word is not a violation of true love, for God has commanded both the preaching and love. We speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). In contrast to those who are forever mouthing love, there are some who do not preach on love and as a result do not get people to love God nor one another.

Without, then, any further introductory remarks, let us go directly to the Bible study of the subject of love, not that we can consider everything the Bible says about it, but that we might have a fuller grasp of the subject and be better prepared to increase that virtue within our hearts.

I. There Is God's Love For The Human Race.

A. The Bible Affirms It Many Times--Especially With Reference To His Sending Christ To Die For Us.

Let us notice just a few:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (I John 3:16).

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

B. His Love For The Human Race Was A Love For

Sinners, Rebels, Enemies.

When God loved us, it was not because we loved Him. I John 4:10 says:

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Yes, today as Christians, we love Him, but let us not forget:

"He first loved us" (I John 4:19).

It was people who were dead in trespasses and sins that God loved (Eph. 2:1). It was people who had sinned and come short of the glory of God that God loved (Rom. 3:23). It was a hold-out for rebels, this earth into which Jesus came and who was hated by them because of his exposing their wickedness (John 7:7). It was for enemies of God that Jesus died upon Calvary (Rom. 5:10).

II. There Is Man's Love For God Also Taught In The Bible.

A. Man Once Sold Out To Sin Is Now To Love God With His Whole Being.

Conversion is one of the great doctrines of Christianity. It is a subject that takes into consideration both man's wickedness and his guilt. It is a subject rooted in the mercy of God to forgive and the love of God to lead to repentance. It is a subject that involves an entering a new life as a new creature. We know man's past--sold out to sin and selfishness. What is life now that he is converted? He is to love God. Mark 12:30 says:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

B. Man's Love For God Involves Loving The Truth Of God.

Some want only a religion of *doing*. But, Christianity involves a *belief* of the truth as much as it does a practice of righteousness. II Thess. 2:10-12 condemns those who do not love and believe the truth. He who loves God can join the Psalmist in saying:

"O how love I thy law!" (Psa. 119:97).

If you do not love the preaching of God's Word; if you want preaching done on a milder plane; if the Bible is unattractive and boring to you, you might well question your love for God.

C. Man's Love For God Likewise Involves Obedience And Service To God.

"Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (I John 2:5).

Love and obedience are connected together as far back as the giving of the Ten Commandments. In commenting on one of the commandments, God said that He was a merciful God to those who loved Him and kept His commandments (Exo. 20:6). The disciples claimed to love Jesus. He challenged their love in the following words:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Each time that Peter stated his love for Jesus, He gave him work to do (John 21:15-17). How else could He love God with his "strength" than to do something for God? You recall, do you not, that man is to love God with his strength as well as his mind or heart? How meaningless, how formal, how untrue must people's songs both appear and be when they sing: "Oh, how I love Jesus," but do not live for Him nor serve Him. Thus, if a person claiming to be a Christian is not a generous giver, a thorough church worker for Christ, a real all-around servant of God, there is something wrong with his love. If he finds it not in his heart to carry out the commandments of the Lord, love is surely lacking.

D. Man's Love For God Also Involves His Love For Righteousness.

The child of God is addressed as follows in Rom, 12:9:

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good".

The Israelities of Amos's day were so guilty of social injustices. For this, he upbraided them in the sternest of ways. To them, he preached the same thing:

"Hate the evil, and love the good" (Amos 5:15).

We know that those who would follow Christ are those seeking after righteousness (Matt. 5:6). To his followers, Jesus said:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

Whoever thinks of himself as one who loves God, but does not live as he ought does not truly love God. Whoever loves the world and its sin has not the love of God in his heart (1 John 2:15). Rather, instead of loving God, he has made himself an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4).

III. There Is Also The Matter Of Love For Our Fellowmen.

A. We Are To Love Our Neighbor.

Rom. 13:8-10 says:

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

If we love our neighbor as ourselves, he won't be given too much trouble from us. Christians do not have a narrow concept of who is included in the term "neighbor" as the Pharisee tried when Jesus told him the parable of the Good Samaritan; which teaches that it is not particularly the fellow who lives next to us, but whoever needs our help (Luke 10:25-37). When the Bible tells us to love our neighbor, it involves loving those who are not Christians as well as loving those who may be Christians.

In addition to our love for them showing up in the good things that we do for them and the bad things that we refrain from doing against them, there is the matter of soul winning that relates to the matter of love. Paul is a good

example of one who truly loved those whom he was seeking to win to Christ. A study of Rom. 10:1 and Rom. 9:1-3 shows his great feeling for them. Such a love should dwell within each of our hearts and should move us forth in a greater soul winning service for Christ.

B. We Are To Love Our Brethren In Christ.

Jesus started this off by saying to those who would be the charter members of the church:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

For some time, the disciples were not doing so well on the matter of love. They had been arguing among themselves as to which one was going to be the greatest (Mark 9:33,34). James and John had even asked for the right and left hand seats when He inaugurated His kingdom (Mark 10:35-37). Jesus used a small child as an object lesson to get this notion out of their heads. He had even washed their feet in an effort to show them what true greatness was. Then, in that great seventeenth chapter of John he prayed several things concerning them--the principle one was the matter of their being harmonious and united. How did that great prayer close? With words relating to their having the love in their hearts that they should have:

"I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in thee" (John 17:26).

In writing the Ephesians, Paul had this to say with reference to the love and treatment of one another:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31,32).

In writing the Philippians, he had this to say:

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:2-4).

In writing the Colossians, he had this to say:

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-14).

In writing to the Hebrews, he had this to say:

"Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1).

C. We are To Love Those Within Our Own Household.

The following Scriptures are very pointed upon this question:

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:19).

"That they (the older women) teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their

children" (Tit. 2:4).

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prov. 15:17).

It seems odd that an institution founded on the basis of love, such as the home is, should ever need instructions concerning love. But, many homes are torn by strife, selfishness, thoughtlessness, and scenes of bitterness. The Bible's teaching along this line, then, is very timely.

D. We Are To Love Our Enemies.

We are to do nothing wrong to make enemies. But, if because of the stand we take for Christ, some people turn against us, we cannot help that. Or if someone is of a nasty disposition, who is always on the "outs" with about everybody, we should not be surprised if we are numbered among those whom they oppose. What should be our attitude toward those who do not love us? The Scripture answers very plainly:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. 5:43-47).

There are surely many things that could be discussed profitably upon this subject of love. It is a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22). People could see that Jesus greatly loved Lazarus as He stood weeping at his tomb (John 11:35,36). Love is to be without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9). The King James version uses the word "dissimulation", which means "hypocrisy". I Pet. 1:22 speaks of "unfeigned love of the brethren" and loving one another with a "pure heart fervently". Heb. 10:24 shows that we are to provoke each other to love and good works. I Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:10; and Gal. 5:6 all connect love and labor. I Cor. 13:13 links faith, hope, and love together and declares that the greatest of the three is love.

The Scriptures show the blessedness of our loving God. Rom. 8:28 says that all things work together for good to them who love the Lord, while I Cor. 2:9 shows that it for those who love Him, God has prepared and revealed the things concerning salvation. Jas. 2:5 shows that God has promised heavenly inheritance to those who love Him, while Jas. 1:12 says He has promised the crown of life to those who love Him.

Don't conclude from this study that God does not have His "hates" as well as His "loves". Prov. 6:16-19 includes seven things that He hates: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness, and the person who sows discord among brethren. Hypocritical worship, Isa. 1:10-15 and Amos 5:21-24 show, God hates. Whatever God hates, it is godliness for us to hate also. Just as we set our watch with another's watch that we esteem to be right,

even so we should set our "loves" and our "hates" according to God's "loves" and "hates", for we esteem Him to be right in all things.

We cannot conclude without showing that there are some things the Christian is not to love, such as: money (I Tim. 6:10), religious show (Matt. 6:5; Matt. 23:5-7), the praise of men inordinately (John 12:42,43), or any sin of the world (I John 2:15, 16; II Tim. 4:10).

Finally, notice the terrible state of any who does not love as he should:

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema (cut off)" (I Cor. 16:22).

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now... But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9,11).

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

In view, then, of the greatness and importance of this matter of love, let us examine ourselves to see how we appear before God in this matter. If others fail in their love, let us not fail and take comfort in their failure. Let us heed these timely words in I John 3:18:

"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Primitive Christianity

Christ began His new covenant religion in the city of Jerusalem in the year 30 A.D. according to our present calendar. That was the same year He died, was buried, arose from the tomb, and returned to heaven. Its first converts were from among those Jews from different parts of the Roman Empire who were in Jerusalem at the time attending their annual Feast of Pentecost. It was a religion planned to include all nations of the earth and to continue its important mission until the second coming of Christ. That religion was launched 1,925 or 19 1/4 centuries ago. During that extended period of time, the experiences through which that religion has passed have been many, as would be naturally expected.

By "primitive Christianity" (the title of this study), we mean Christianity as it was in the beginning in the days of the apostles. According to the dictionary, "primitive" means "pertaining to the beginning, origin, or early times of a thing." What primitive Christianity was like is recorded for us in the book of Acts in particular, ably supplemented by various items of information from the epistles of the

New Testament.

We are sorry to say, but many are but little concerned about what primitive Christianity was like. The modernists see in primitive Christianity only a record of first-century people's ideas of worshipping God, for they deny Biblical inspiration to the apostles. Therefore, to them, what the early church did as guided by the apostles was nothing more than human as far as the authority behind their beliefs and practices was concerned. Naturally, then, modernists feel no necessity of carrying out religion today after the model of primitive Christianity. The so-called fundamental wing of present-day denominationalism has not included the pattern of primitive Christianity among those things which they count as the essentials. Therefore, it is no wonder that they continue defending the deity of Jesus and the inspiration of the Bible, but avoid all doctrinal controversies on baptism, the Lord's supper, church organization, divine names, etc.

Therefore, a study like this should be of particular interest to those who have not as yet made such a study. Your writer has found that there is nothing like a good series of sermons on primitive Christianity, with an application of that subject to religion today, to inject new life into a drifting, dozing, dying congregation.

I. Why We Should Be Interested In Primitive Christianity.

A. The Early Church Was Under The Guidance Of A Message Delivered Through Holy Spirit Inspired Men.

Jesus not only commissioned His apostles with reference to their evangelizing the lost, but He gave them much teaching as to what they were to teach the converts:

"Teaching them (the baptized) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

Humanly, they would have forgotten some of the things Jesus had told them. But, they were promised divine aid in the coming of the Holy Spirit so they would forget nothing:

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came and the church had its beginning, the apostles preached the message of Christ, and their every utterance was Holy Spirit inspired:

"And they (the apostles) were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

The multitude that believed responded to the inspired preaching of Peter and the other apostles, and following their baptism, they were guided by the inspired instruction of the same apostles:

"And they (those baptized) continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42).

When problems arose as to what the church should believe, as in the case of whether or not the Gentiles should be circumcised, the matters were referred to these very

apostles (Acts 15:1,2). They handed down their decision, which was prompted by the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28ff), and the decision was carried from congregation to congregation to abide by (Acts 16:4).

B. We Today Live In The Same Dispensation That Began In 30 A.D.

When Jesus commissioned His apostles concerning their work, He promised to be with them always, even to the end of the world (or "age" as the Revised Version renders it) (Matt. 28:20). Neither the end of the world nor the age that began on Pentecost has yet come. That religion so long predicted by the Old Testament prophets finally came, and it came to stay until the end of time. The Old Testament religion included within its divine records the prophecy of a religion that would come and take its place. Christianity's sacred records look not to the coming of another earthly religion, but to the second coming of Christ that will consummate all things of earth.

The Bible shows that Christianity is a "once for all" religion. That phrase means "once for all time" or that which is "perpetually valid". Instead of looking for some new revelation or compromising the message delivered through the apostles, Jude 3 beckons us to maintain the faith through contending for it, and notice how that faith is spoken of in that verse:

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once ('once for all' in the Revised Version) delivered unto the saints."

It is a faith delivered unto the saints once for all time. If it is, then we are still in the same dispensation that began with the delivering of that message. Those elements comprising Christianity are to be done until Jesus comes as is seen in this statement relative to the Lord's supper:

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

C. God's Laws For A Dispensation Are In Force Throughout The Dispensation.

This is easily proven by the Bible. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell of the return of the Jews to their native land after their years of Babylonian Captivity. Though the law of Moses had been given about 1,000 years before their time and though Moses through whom that law had been given had been dead more than 900 years, the law of Moses was still in effect in their day. Ezra and Nehemiah instituted mighty reforms among the people, reinstating the feasts and other matters of the law according to the law of Moses. The law of Moses did not end until Jesus died upon the cross. Therefore, His days of earthly ministry were lived during the last years and months that the law was in effect. But, though that law had been given about 1,500 years before His ministry, and though its authority was about to pass away, Jesus taught men to do as it said:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (teaching the law): all therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do" (Matt. 23:1,2).

"Shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded" (Matt. 8:4).

Since, then, we are under the laws given for this dispensation through the apostles, we are expected of God to abide by the teaching that characterized primitive Christianity. All who do not bring the same message about Jesus, the plan of salvation, the way of Christian living, the pattern for the church, etc. that was delivered to the primitive church by the apostles is not to be received as from God (II John 10, 11), but is to be avoided instead of fellowshiped (Rom. 16:17, 18).

Yes, we should be interested in primitive Christianity.

II. How Primitive Christianity Functioned As Contrasted With Much Of Religion Today.

A. Primitive Christianity Had A Real Respect For The All-Authority Of Christ.

The Scripture says concerning the authority of Christ:

"He is the head of the body, the church...that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

"He 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" (Eph. 1:20-22).

In the apostolic day, it was believed that Christ was the head of the church, governing the body. But, in much of religion today, maybe through ignorance, maybe through unbelief, little is done with an eye to doing what Jesus said in the way He said to do it. People maintain their own opinions about a subject even after hearing what the Bible teaches to the contrary upon it. People put into the eldership men whom they think would be good to fill the office whether they have the qualifications for that office laid down by Christ through His apostle Paul. There are those quick to tell you that it is the attitude of the heart and not the form of baptism that matters even when the Bible prescribes both the attitude and the form.

B. It Emphasized Preaching And Personal Testimony.

Christ's representatives to establish His religion (the apostles) were all preachers. There were no specialists who served as the Administrators, Social Workers, Governmental Lobbyists, or Public Relations men. All the apostles were preachers, and they who did the preaching took care of any work of administration that became necessary for them to take care of. None of them took time out from their preaching to devote themselves to social work. They didn't meddle in governmental matters, and they had no specialists devoting their time to public relations.

Christianity is a preaching religion. It has a message to be declared. Primitive Christianity was a preaching religion. Her leaders preached publicly, and all the disciples bore personal testimony to those whom they met. But, in this day and age, the swing is away from preaching, and almost no personal testimony is done any more. Special "Decision Days" have replaced day-to-day teaching and night-by-night preaching to win the lost. Programs, big dinners, parties, and contests are used to "up" attendance rather than gospel preaching and personal testimony. Anything over thirty

or forty minutes is frowned upon as too long by way of a sermon. If we may so say, "sermonettes" are making "Christianettes".

C. It Was Simple In Its Organization.

Elders, Deacons, and Evangelists--these comprised the functioning officers in primitive Christianity. Phil. 1:1 includes all three:

"Paul and Timotheus (evangelists), the servants of Jesus Christ; to all the saints in Christ Jesus (the membership) which are at Philippi, with the bishops (elders) and deacons."

In modern-day religion, one beholds the most elaborate of organizations--so complex, so unnecessary as far as doing what Jesus actually told the church to do, and unfounded by the Scriptures. Early congregations were not weighted down with all kinds of organizations either within the local congregation or over the local congregation. They had no ladies aid to supplement the treasury, no state secretary or presiding elder or district superintendent to oversee the congregations, no ecumenical councils or delegate conventions to decide the doctrine, and no pope to bless the whole church. Christ put the offices He wanted into the church, and those offices He put in are adequate to do what He has told the church to do. Evangelists had their work, and they were to do it; elders had theirs, and they were to do it; deacons had theirs, and they were to do it.

D. It Did Not Employ Human Names For Either The Members Or The Church.

In the religious world, one comes across Mennonites, Catholics, Lutherans, Adventists, Methodists, Dunkards, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Christian Scientists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Nazarenes, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, and many other humanly devised and humanly adopted names. Some honor the men who founded them; others are names related to something originally emphasized by said groups; some are nick-names that "stuck"; two of them (Baptists and Nazarenes) are both found in the Scriptures, but not as names for God's people. John was called "John the Baptist" not because there was such a religious body in existence in his day, but because he baptized. Just as there was "Simon the tanner", "Alexander the coppersmith," so was there "John the Baptist". Jesus was called a Nazarene not because He belonged to a religious group wearing that name, but because He was from Nazareth--just as people from Missouri are called "Missourians" and people from Iowa "Iowans". With so many different names afloat in the religious world that are not found in the Bible, is it any wonder that we hear on every hand that there is nothing in a religious name? But, when God gives a name for His people, it is not faith or reverence to say that one can disregard that name and use some humanly devised name. Jas. 2:7 shows that God's people were called by some name which was spoken of as a "worthy name":

"Do not they (the rich) blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?"

But, that verse does not tell what that name was. Other passages, however, make it plain as to what it was. Acts

11:26 says:

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

And Peter later wrote:

"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in this name."

Therefore, those who regard the pattern of primitive Christianity have not joined the chorus that says there is nothing in a name. They have sought to bear the name "Christian" in faith and conduct to the glory of God. They recognize that such a great man as the apostle Paul refused to sanction people wearing his name (I Cor. 1:12,13). It were to wear the name of a man, whose would be better to wear than that of the great apostle Paul? I know of none that I would rather wear than his. But, it would be wrong to wear his. And if it would be wrong to wear his, it would be wrong to wear the name of any other human when that honor and distinction belongs to Christ who was crucified for us and by whose authority we have been baptized--two things related to this question (I Cor. 1:12,13).

Neither were human names fastened onto congregations in primitive Christianity nor should they be today as is the case throughout the sectarian world.

E. It Held That Immersion Was Necessary To Salvation.

A former study has been devoted to this question. People in the apostles' days were baptized with the idea of obtaining the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Pet. 3:20,21 and other blessings connected with salvation. But, today, the general attitude toward baptism is different. Many have had nothing done to them called baptism. Most people who have, have submitted to sprinkling (a substitute) for immersion taught in the Bible. Among those who do immerse, there are those who rob it of its saving aspect. How the devil has induced people to kick around that sacred ordinance by which a penitent sinner contacts the saving blood of Christ! It was never so done in primitive Christianity.

F. It Gave An Important Place To The Lord's Supper.

A recent study has also been devoted to this subject, making it unnecessary to elaborate here. But, the frequent place the Lord's supper occupied in the weekly assembly of the church as contrasted with the infrequency of present-day observances must be stated. Many disregard the Biblical frequency of weekly observance, having it only once a month, others but once a quarter (4 times a year), and still others but once a year. Some members are absent those Sundays when they do serve it, so there are long lapses of time between observances for them. Some are present when it is passed, but do not partake of it. Still others never do serve the Lord's supper. Many others who do have it teach that it is simply commemorative, having no connection with forgiveness. It is commemorative all right (Luke 22:19), but those in primitive Christianity were taught that it was a communion of the body and blood of Christ also (I Cor. 10:16). But, what is the purpose of the blood of Christ other than the remission of our sins? People can get the connection between baptism and forgiveness from Rom. 6:3, where it says we are baptized into His death. Why can they

not also get the connection between the Lord's supper and forgiveness from I Cor. 10:16, where it says we have a communion of his body and blood? But, you can be sure the devil will fight the Lord's supper for the Christian as well as baptism for the sinner.

G. It Did Not Compromise With The Religions About Them.

Did God have a people in Old Testament times? Yes, the Israelites. Did He allow them to compromise with and to go in with the religions about them? No. Read Deut. 7:2-6:

"Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

Does God have a people in New Testament times? Yes, the Christians (those who have become obedient to the gospel--not just everybody claiming to be a Christian). Does he allow us to compromise with and go in with the religions about us? No. Read the following passages:

"Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:14-18).

There are only two groups before God--His people and those who aren't. Those who aren't God's people may be religious as well as irreligious. But, He calls His people to separation from them whether they are religious or otherwise as far as compromising with and going in with them is concerned. His people live in the same world as those who aren't; they see them from day to day; they befriend them in every way possible, but they do not believe as others do, nor do they do as others do. They believe what God says, and they do what He says. Christianity's intolerance toward other religions accounted for the great persecution waged against it in its beginning days, and the same results today. But, compromise is a characteristic of our times. Divine lines of fellowship religiously and otherwise are totally disregarded by the mass of people claiming to be Christian, and instead of actually changing what God has said, they are only cutting themselves off from God (Acts 3:22,23).

H. It Opposed The Sin Of The World.

The early Christians were forbidden to love the world and its sin (I John 2:15,16) or to conform to the standards of the world (Rom. 12:2). Rather than partaking of the wickedness around them, they were to stand against it (Eph. 5:11 being told that one item of an acceptable religion before God was to keep themselves unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27). This also brought on persecutions even as it did for Jesus (John 7:7). But, religion today falls far short of demanding that inner and outer purity characteristic of primitive Christianity. Instead of the church triumphing over sin, sin has often invaded religion itself. You can hardly name a sin that is not being openly practiced by those who claim to be religious. Such were put out of the fellowship of primitive Christianity by divine commandment (I Cor. 5:1-13).

I. It Truly Lived For Heaven And Looked For The Return Of Jesus.

The early Christians were called upon to consecrate themselves as living sacrifices to God (Rom. 12:1). They were told to serve God in the same way they had formerly served sin (Rom. 6:11-14,17-33). They were told to lay up their treasures in heaven rather than upon the earth (Matt. 6:19-21). They were told to set their affection on spiritual things rather than upon earthly things (Col. 3:1-3). They suffered the loss of earthly things for the sake of Christ in their persecutions (Heb. 10:34). They served the Lord in soul winning work (Acts 8:1,4). They were people of prayer; they sang praises to God even in the midst of earthly difficulties; they brought their tithes and offerings for the work of God and even sold their properties in order to to feed the needy in times of emergency--plus many other things that could be mentioned had we space to do so. The return of Jesus was their hope (Tit. 2:11-14), and many passages indicated their anticipation for it. But, alas! today it is vastly different in many religious quarters. Frankly, few indeed today believe in the consecrated life of the Christian. Few there be who daily anticipate the return of Jesus. Worldliness and materialism alike are consuming great multitudes of individuals who think of themselves as Christians.

Had we space, we would like to tell you how the Bible foresaw a great falling away from primitive Christianity, which has taken place in denominationalism. We would like to tell you of those who are seeking the old paths of God's word and who are rejoicing in that way. To all who have not had a conscience upon primitive Christianity, let me close by quoting to you the fitting words of Jeremiah to the people of His day, who needed to return to the way of God:

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16).

Our delight in and our profit from any particular study rises and improves in proportion to the application which we bestow upon it.

Things Connected with the Return of Jesus

The Son of God has already made one trip to the earth. He stayed here about thirty-three years. After accomplishing His purpose in coming to earth, He returned to heaven, where He has been ever since. But, according to the Bible, He is yet to make another trip here. He Himself said while on trial before the high priest:

"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

Today, He is on God's right hand in heaven, fulfilling the first part of that promise. But, the second part--that concerning His coming in the clouds--will as assuredly take place as did the first part. Possibly the first recorded instance of Jesus concerning a second coming was made to His apostles at the same time He broke the news to them of His coming crucifixion. It took place up near Caesarea Philippi. His words to them were:

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

When He vanished from their sight at the time of His ascension, two angels appeared to them and reassured them of His return. They said:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

So the return of Jesus has been and remains a part of the faith of the church. If there were many predictions in Old Testament days of His first coming, there are also many predictions in the New Testament of His second coming. It is, therefore, obligatory upon all who would accept the Bible as God's Word to believe in the return of Jesus. While modernism rejects the idea of His return, just as they reject so many other things taught in the Bible, those who have pledged themselves to believe in the Bible's inspiration hold to the teaching of His personal and visible return in the clouds.

Any human sitting down to a typewriter feels his descriptive limitations as well as his knowledge limitations to do justice to such a great subject as "Things Connected With the Return of Jesus". The Bible has told us enough to impress us with the greatness of that day and the unprecedented happenings of that day, but it has not explained everything for us concerning those things. The human mind appreciates what God has revealed to us upon

that subject, but the human heart would know even more upon it than has been revealed. No doubt, many things connected with that day will not be understood by us until that day arrives.

Having preached often upon this subject to interested and appreciative audiences, we come at this time to share some of the things most surely taught in the Scriptures upon it. We sincerely hope you will receive a blessing from searching into these things and pondering upon them. Let the truth of these things sink down into your hearts in such a way that you will derive whatever lessons God has for us in telling us ahead of time of these coming events. Otherwise, a knowledge of these things will profit you nothing.

I. The Resurrection Of The Dead.

A. The Bible Connects The Resurrection Of The Dead With The Return Of Jesus.

Notice first of all I Thess. 4:16:

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16).

The above passage points out that when Jesus comes, He will descend with a shout. That shout, accompanied by the voice of the archangel and the sounding of the trump of God, will awaken the dead. If one is not careful, he might conclude from the above passage that the dead in Christ are to be resurrected prior to the resurrection of the wicked, who are also to be resurrected, but if one reads the 17th verse (the verse following the above passage), he will see that "the dead in Christ shall rise first" means that the departed saints will be brought back to life before the living saints are caught up to meet the Lord. They will both be caught up "together". John 5:28, definitely shows that both the righteous and unrighteous dead will be raised when the voice of Jesus sounds at His second coming:

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

Yes, all the dead--both righteous and unrighteous--will be raised. The righteous will want to be, and the unrighteous won't, but what people want will not be the governing principle on that day. That will be the day of the Lord, as it is so often called in the Bible. He will be the one who will have the "say-so" on that day, and He has told us ahead of time that His voice will bring all the dead--both good and bad--forth in resurrection.

B. The Resurrection Of The Body Relates To The Eternal States.

Heaven will not be a place of disembodied spirits who once lived upon the earth in physical forms or physical bodies. Those who will dwell therein will abide in immortal, incorruptible bodies given them at the return of Jesus. Paul spoke of this body in II Cor. 5:1,2,4:

"For we know that if our earthly house of this taber-

nacle (the human body) were dissolved (through physical death), we have a building of God (a new body), an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (this body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven...For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

I Cor. 15:37 compares death to sowing grain and the resurrection to the coming forth of the plant afterwards. That verse shows that the resurrection body will be different from the first body, just as the stalk that grows is different from the kernel that was sown:

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain."

A few verses later, Paul returns to the contrast:

"It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44).

We have never seen such a body as that with which the dead shall come forth. Consequently, John wrote that it has not yet appeared what we shall be, but that we know we shall be like Christ at His coming (I John 3:2). Phil. 3:20,21 shows that the Lord, at His coming, will change our vile or physical bodies so as to be like His glorious body. No doubt, this is what John had in mind in I John 3:2. Paul definitely says:

"As we have borne the image of the earthy (a physical body), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (like Christ has)" (I Cor. 15:49).

The purpose of bestowing such a body upon the saints is that they might go to that incorruptible place with Jesus (I Cor. 15:50). That body, being incorruptible will know no pain and being immortal will know no death. That is what Rev. 21:4 promises those who get to inhabit the new heaven and new earth.

The Bible does not give a description of the resurrection body of the condemned, but it is evident that the body God will give them will be one prepared for the eternal fate to befall them in hell. God who made a bush in Moses' day that could be on fire without being consumed (Exo. 3:2, 3) is fully capable of making bodies for the wicked that can suffer in the lake of fire without end.

Yes, the resurrection of the dead is connected with the return of Jesus.

II. The Bodily Transformation Of The Living Saints.

A. The Bible Connects The Bodily Transformation Of The Living Saints With The Return Of Jesus.

There will be people living upon the earth when Jesus comes. Some of them will be saints of God. They will never experience death. Paul said:

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (I Cor. 15:51).

When? At the same time the dead are raised:

"We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15:51,52)

B. This Change Is Necessary.

Even though they have not died, they cannot go to heaven in their corruptible and mortal physical bodies. Speaking of that change, Paul wrote:

"This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53).

Why? For the very reason that the dead will be raised with incorruptible, immortal bodies (already discussed).

How hard it is to bid one another goodbye here in death! The unutterable pain that so often precedes one's passing! What a joy from every standpoint to be one of Christ's living ones at His coming! How heartily I agree with the words of that beautiful song "Christ Returneth" that say: "Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying: no sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying."

Yes, the bodily transformation of the living saints is connected with the return of Jesus, and it is a blessed part of our faith.

III. The Great Judgment Day.

A. The Bible Connects The Great Judgment Day With The Return Of Jesus.

As far back as the book of Daniel, we can see the resurrection of the dead (which will take place when Jesus returns) connected with judgment:

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

That passage in John 5:28,29 will bear quoting from this standpoint also:

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

One of the last statements in the Bible concerning the coming of Christ is that of the judgment connected with it:

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

B. The Bible Represents That All Will Be There On The Day Of Judgment.

Consider these statements:

"EVERY ONE of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

"We must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge THE WORLD in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31).

"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: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31,32).

Both the great man of the earth and the common man will be there:

"I saw the dead, SMALL and GREAT, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).

Even people who lived long ago will be there:

"The MEN OF NINEVEH shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and, behold a greater than Jonas is here. The QUEEN OF THE SOUTH shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:40-42).

"Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of SODOM and GOMORRHA in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. 10:14,15).

While the saints will greet the Lord with open arms, admiring Him on whom they had believed and hoped, though they had not previously seen Him (I Pet. 1:8), the wicked will mourn when they see Him coming (Rev. 1:7). Oh that men would realize they will someday reap on an eternal basis what they sow while abiding here on the earth so short a time! No doubt, multitudes would live differently.

Yes, the great day of judgment is connected with the return of Jesus.

IV. The Casting Of The Wicked Into Hell.

A. The Bible Connects The Casting Of The Wicked Into Hell With The Return Of Jesus.

II Thess. 1:7-9 says:

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

In Matt. 25:31,32, we saw that Jesus, at His coming, would divide the people like a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. That passage continues:

"He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:33,41).

Notice in the II Thess. 1:7-9 passage quoted above that the angels will accompany Jesus here to help in the judgment and punishment of the wicked. Jesus interpreted His parable of the wheat and tares for His disciples, and His interpretation shows the connection of the angels with the punishment of the wicked at His coming:

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:37-42).

He told and interpreted His parable of the drag net similarly:

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:47-50).

B. The Punishment Of The Wicked Will Be Terrible, But Every Bit Deserved.

The Bible describes the suffering of the wicked in hell as a terrible experience, as we would well imagine. Some of the verses quoted above indicate it as do many other passages. But, don't forget this: God will judge righteously and punish justly. The sufferings of the wicked in hell will but reflect the awfulness of the sins that men have committed that sent them there. No man in hell will cry out for justice, but mercy. He will be receiving justice, but the day of mercy will have passed. Because the next study in this series will be devoted to the punishment of the wicked, we shall not go into the matter fuller here.

Yes, the casting of the wicked into hell is connected with the return of Jesus.

V. The Taking Of The Saints To Heaven.

A. The Bible Connects The Taking Of The Saints To Heaven With The Return Of Jesus.

This is clear from several passages:

"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).

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16,17).

In the John passage quoted, Jesus is like a young man who goes to get a home prepared for his bride. He gets it prepared and returns for her. The apostles hated to see Him depart, as would any bride, but they were comforted in the purpose of His going and with the thought that He would return to take them to that place forever. This passage corrects some people's notion that heaven will be right here on this earth. No, Jesus is not coming to stay with His people. Rather, He is coming to get His people and to take them to that place in God's presence that He

has been preparing.

The I Thessalonian passage quoted shows that the resurrected saints and the living saints will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and that eternity will be theirs with Jesus.

B. What A Wonderful Time That Will Be For The Saints!

The Bible pictures His people as looking for His coming with great anticipation. Listen to these passages:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

In that day, the saints will admire and glorify the Lord and will also themselves be glorified by His coming. Notice the above statements borne out by the following passages:

"...when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Thess. 1:10).

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:16-18).

There are surely many things to be said concerning the rewarding of the saints, but inasmuch as we have a study coming up on that subject, we shall not go into the matter fuller at this time.

Yes, the taking of the saints to heaven is connected with the return of Jesus.

VI. The Destruction Of The Present Universe.

A. The Bible Connects The Destruction Of The Present Universe With The Return Of Jesus.

As far back as the time of Isaiah, God had made this prediction:

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

But, when will the present heaven and earth pass away? When will the new heavens and new earth come into existence? Isaiah does not answer, but Peter does:

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up...Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:10,13).

The day of the Lord when all these things will happen is the coming of Jesus. Study the entire chapter, and it will be clear to your mind.

B. This Destruction Will Take Place By Fire.

The above passage indicates that fact. Some try to see in this a prediction of atomic destruction of which the world is so fearful today. I believe this universe and its future is God's. It will not pass away until He gets ready for it to do so. Men cannot terminate that which God does not want terminated! If the present universe goes up in smoke through atomic power, remember that it will be because God has so planned it from a long time back. He will have the new heavens and new earth where the saints will abide all ready.

What a terrible destruction! Huge heavenly bodies crashing into each other, igniting, and burning. The earth splits wide open, and the molten mass of fire from its center envelops it as it goes up in smoke. What noise and what heat! And that which had been the scene of men's sins will be gone, to be remembered no more. That which men had lived for dissolved by fire. In view of these things, I address you in the words of Peter:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (II Pet. 3:11).

Yes, the destruction of the present universe is connected with the return of Jesus.

Now do you not say that the return of Jesus will be a great day? We have been given but a few brief glances into those things in the Scriptures, but enough has been given us to stir us to preparation for that day. When these things are to take place without the shadow of a doubt, how can men stand day after day without obeying the gospel? How can some who have named the name of Jesus live in sin and backslidden ways? The call goes forth today to watch and be ready for His coming (Matt. 24:42-44). Yes, "There's a great day coming, A great day coming; There's a great day coming by and by, When the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left. Are you ready for that day to come?" When I study these things right out of the Bible and am made to know what all is yet to come, I am made to say, "Lord, I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in!"

The Punishment of the Wicked

We know that every well regulated government rewards the law-abiding citizens with liberty and enjoyments that come through the government, and every well regulated government also punishes those who disobey its laws.

For instance, in our nation, we are all given the opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These are for the law-abiding citizens. But, through violating the law, one may lose his life (capital punishment), or his liberty (being jailed), or his pursuit of happiness (in jail, he will be deprived of everything except that which the institution may allow him).

Don't overlook the fact that God in His government is as wise and as just as any earthly government ever thought of being. God does reward the obedient, but He punishes the wicked. The final two studies in this year-long series will deal with the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the saints.

Though the Bible continues to say what it has always said about God's punishment of the wicked, there are those who have come to accept their own theories on this question rather than the Bible's teaching. Such theories boil down to the following: God loves everybody. He has prepared a heaven, but no hell. The idea of hell, they say, is out-of-date and out-moded. It is not geared, they say, for twentieth-century thinking and living. Modern religion emphasizes the love of God and eliminates the thought of the wrath of God. A couple of years ago, I wrote a rather lengthy review and exposure of a magazine article that took the above position. That magazine article was shot through and through with plain denials of Bible teaching and substituted mere human reasoning.

Having accepted the position that the Bible is God's Word, we are pleased to abide by its teaching upon this as well as any other subject. To the Bible, then, we turn for a consideration of God's punishment of the wicked.

That God is a God who punishes the wicked is evident from two standpoints: (1) what He has done, and (2) what He has said.

I. What God Has Done.

What God has done in the past should serve as an index as to what He will do in the future, for He is a constant, steadfast, faithful God, who is governed by truth and righteousness and is not ever changing from time to time. He has many times punished the wicked and had those punishments recorded in the Bible to warn us of what to expect should we not live as He has commanded. Let us look at some of His recorded punishments.

A. Adam And Eve.

When Adam and Eve had sinned, in addition to pronouncing upon them the various penalties found in Gen. 3:16-19, God punished them as follows:

"So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).

B. Cain

When Cain had killed his righteous brother Abel, God came to him and said:

"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the

earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (Gen. 4:10-12).

When Cain heard this sentence, he exclaimed that his punishment was greater than he could bear (Gen. 4:13). No doubt, this represents the response of all who are brought face to face with the punishment of God. But, notice that he did not say his punishment was greater than he deserved. God is righteous in all His judgments.

C. The Old World.

When God saw the wickedness of man upon the earth, it grieved Him and brought a regret to Him that He had ever made man, so corrupt had he become and so antagonistic to the way of God. Because of man's sinfulness, God pronounced this judgment:

"Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die" (Gen. 6:17).

Only the righteous family of Noah and a few of all the animals and birds, taken into the ark to preserve life upon the earth, were spared the world's greatest destruction to date.

D. Sodom And Gomorrha.

From the standpoint of immorality, Sodom and Gomorrha must be listed as the world's most corrupt cities. How the will of God was trampled underfoot in those two cities of the fertile valley of the Jordan! But, great sin is so often found in the very midst of prosperity. Because of their sins, God destroyed them with a terrible destruction described as follows:

"The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" (Gen. 19:24,25).

The New Testament recalls this destruction and says that it (as well as other punishments from God) should warn all who would live ungodly (II Pet. 2:4-6).

E. The Idolaters At Mt. Sinai.

Just a short time after God brought the Israelites out of Egypt with a mighty hand, He led them to the foot of Mt. Sinai, an unusually rugged peak on our Arabian peninsula. There, He summoned them about the mount and in a fashion calculated to strike the fear of God into every heart, He spoke unto them the words of the ten commandments. He, then, called Moses up into the mount to get the two tables of stone upon which the words of the ten commandments were written and to receive other laws, which Moses was to write in a book. Because Moses was in the mount what seemed to them an endless amount of time (forty days), they took their jewelry, melted it in a fire, and fashioned a golden calf before which they fell down in worship. This was a direct violation of the first part of the ten commandments which God had just spoken. Only the tribe of Levi took their stand with Moses and God against this idolatry.

To them, God gave this commandment:

"Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour" (Exo. 32:27).

The result was that three thousand fell by the sword of the Levites (Gen. 32:28). Surely, the Israelites should have realized that God meant what He said when He gave commandments to be obeyed!

F. Nadab And Abihu.

God gave strict instructions to the priests who served in the tabernacle. Nadab and Abihu, sons of the high priest Aaron, disobeyed God in using strange fire in offering incense one day. The following punishment from God fell upon them:

"There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2).

G. The Israelites In The Wilderness.

God was in the process of leading them toward that good land of Canaan, which He had promised to give them. Thus far on the journey, God had been adequate for every need they had had. He had brought them through the Red Sea miraculously. He had destroyed Pharaoh and his men, who pursued them. He had fed them with manna. He had made bitter water sweet for them to drink. He had led them in a mighty defeat of the Amalekites, who came out against them. He had led them by His pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. He had told them He would likewise give them the good land west of the Jordan River. Twelve spies were sent into the land ahead of time. What a wonderful land it was! They brought back a specimen of some of the fruit that grew there--a cluster of grapes that was carried on a staff between two of them, some pomegranates, and some figs. But, ten of the twelve men feared that they would not be able to conquer the land because of the giant-sized inhabitants and their walled cities. Their report, though a direct thrust at the ability of God to do for them what He had said He would do, convinced the mass of the people. God was enraged against them, and well might He have been. He pronounced the following punishment upon them, which was fulfilled to the letter:

"Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning what I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun (the two faithful spies). But your little ones (who were too young to be partakers in their sins), which we said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness" (Num. 14:29-33).

H. The Captivities Of Israel And Judah.

Both the northern and southern kingdoms fell away from God into idolatry. The northern kingdom of Israel was the first to fall into idolatry, and it was the first of the two to

go into captivity. God said concerning the kingdom:

"Samaria (the capital) shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up" (Hos. 13:16).

The Assyrians came, according to the above prediction, and ended them with a terrible slaughter, carrying the balance of them back to Nineveh, where they were made slaves. In time, God had to pronounce a similar punishment upon Judah:

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem (the capital) shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (Mic. 3:12).

The Babylonians came in fulfillment of the above prophecy, and Judah was made to know that God is a God of punishment upon the wicked as well as a God of blessing upon the righteous.

There are so many things that could be brought from the Bible that would show that God has many times risen in punishment against wickedness. People who have read the Bible know this. I ask: has God changed that He will not punish wickedness any longer? Of course, not! God is an unchangeable God, and He will punish the wicked as He has said He will do as much as He has punished the wicked in the past.

II. What God Has Said.

What has God said concerning His punishment of the wicked? Whatever He has said, we should surely believe. Let us look at what He has said concerning the punishment of the wicked.

A. As Delivered Through John The Baptist.

Concerning Jesus, John preached:

"Now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire...He that cometh after me is mightier than I...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:10-12).

B. As Delivered Through Jesus.

While Jesus was here, He had much to say about the punishment of the wicked. Listen to some of Jesus' pronouncements upon this subject:

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 7:19).

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4,5).

"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand,

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41).

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33).

"If thy hand offend thee ('cause thee to sin'), cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-48).

C. As Delivered Through Paul.

Here are some words from his inspired pen upon a divine punishment:

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11).

"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

"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? For we know him that hath said, "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:28-31).

"Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

D. As Delivered Through Peter And Jude.

Peter wrote:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Pet. 2:9).

Jude wrote:

"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 5-7).

E. As Revealed Through John In Revelation.

The book of Revelation has many references. Here are a few:

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:10).

"Whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

"The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18).

If space were unlimited, we could go on and on presenting actual quotations right from the Bible on the question of God's punishment of the wicked. We have employed the method followed in this study to show that the Bible teaches divine punishment of the wicked in a lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is called hell fire, where the fire is unquenchable and the suffering unending. If one accepts the authority of the Scriptures, this should be sufficient to establish the fact of God's coming punishment of the wicked. If one doesn't accept the authority of the Scriptures, it would do little good to employ mere human reasoning to convince one of that coming fact. The question is not whether God is going to punish the wicked--He will--but how many are ready to meet the Lord when He comes and be found upon His right hand in judgment rather than His left hand. Let me close by saying:

"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10).

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

The Reward of the Saints

"The Plan of God!" What a wonderful theme to think upon, to fill our minds with, and to learn more about! For fifty-one studies, we have been thinking together upon it. We have learned from what has been set before us. We have had other things recalled to our minds. But, all the foregoing fifty-one studies would end in incompleteness should we not bring you the fifty-second study--this study on the reward of the saints. All the plan of God looks forward to the final rewarding of the saints throughout all eternity.

When quoting what the Bible says about the after-life of happiness for God's children, we have been told by disbelievers to question the Bible upon this point. We have

been told that the Bible merely borrowed the idea of immortality from pagan religions. We are told of the Indian buried with his bow and arrow and his dog so he would have them when he arrived at the "Happy Hunting Ground". We have been told of the Egyptians burying treasures and personal possessions with their dead, who likewise believed in another life in which these things would be used. They say the Bible writers borrowed the idea of an after-life. Did they borrow the idea and write it in the Bible, or are all of these existing ideas among the pagans corruptions of the original idea given the human race by God Himself? No doubt, the latter is true. Therefore, the Bible gives us the true elaboration of the original idea, which pagan religions have corrupted very naturally by the passing of many centuries of time.

Yes, there is a reward for the saints in the great beyond. Why should Christians suffer persecution for righteousness' sake if there is no reward hereafter. This is the question that Paul raised:

"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die" (I Cor. 15:32).

Jesus taught that there is a "pay day" coming for the righteous, if we may use that expression:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14).

Paul likewise taught a coming day or reward for faithfulness to Christ. When he neared the hour of death, he said:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7,8).

The truth of the matter is, we are now busy planting seeds that will mature at the coming of Christ. Just as Jesus' parables of the talents (Matt. 25) and the pounds (Luke 19) might be divided into three parts: (1) the committing to the servants, (2) the administration by the servants, and (3) the reckoning afterwards, even so are we now in the process of administering that which has been committed to us. If we prove faithful, we shall hear those welcome words:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

I. Saints Are Only Partly Rewarded In This Life.

A. We Do Receive Many Special Blessings Right Here In This Life.

Spiritually, we are the sons of God right here in this life (I John 3:2). This is a great honor, and it brings with it many blessings. As a Father, God hears our prayers and

gives us the good things which we ask of Him (Matt. 7:7-11). Who can calculate all the blessings received by a Christian through the answer to his prayers? In our acceptance of Christ, our sins of the past were washed away in His blood (Rev. 1:5). Being thus justified before God, we have come into the possession of peace of heart and mind (Rom. 5:1 and Matt. 11:28,29). This is a peace that the world does not have nor can it give it to us (John 14:27). While the world enjoys the pleasures that last but for a season, saints have joy that is unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8). We have found the pleasures that are forevermore at God's right hand (Psa. 16:11). While God has not promised to make any of His children earthly rich, He has promised to provide their earthly necessities (Matt. 6:33) a promise which He has not particularly made to the unsaved. It is recognized that Christianity pays with reference to the life to come, but many fail to realize the blessings that come even in the present life. 1 Tim. 4:8 says:

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

B. The Main Part Of The Saints' Reward Is Yet To Come.

(1) We have been told of an inheritance that is to be given.

Notice some of these interesting passages:

"The Spirit itself 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).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3,4).

"For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7).

What a wonderful time is ahead for all the saints as they are granted their eternal inheritances from God made possible through Jesus!

(2) We have been told of crowns that will be given us.

Crowns are signs of victory. The saints have been promised crowns:

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they (people of earth) do it (their earthly striving) to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:24).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (1 Tim. 4:8).

Crowns are also signs of ruling. Though our rule has not been defined, the Scriptures indicate that we shall rule:

"They shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26,27).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (1 Tim. 2:12).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:20).

Surely, those who have humbled themselves here will be highly exalted then. Those who have served here will possess there. Those who have suffered here will reign there.

(3) We have been told of a rest that awaits us.

After God had completed His creative work, He rested. Heb. 4:4 makes reference to this fact, and that section of Scripture goes on to show that after a Christian's work here on earth is done, there is a rest that awaits him. Heb. 4:9-11 says:

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

While the wicked in hell will have no rest day nor night (Rev. 14:11), the saints will be enjoying the rest that God has promised them. "The toils of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way."

II. The Bible's Description Of The Saints' Home In Glory.

A. It Will Be Beautiful

The glory of our heavenly home will make the finest mansion here on earth look as drab as a shack by the side of the road. If homes were available here on earth like the heavenly home will be, people would work their fingers to the bone trying to obtain them. If such homes were available, real estate men would rise to ecstasy in their newspaper listings of them. Listen to the Bible's description of its beauty:

"He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal" (Rev. 22:1).

"He shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb... And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the

seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 19:11-14, 19-21).

"I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).

Surely, no earthly beauty and no beautiful structures of earth are worthy to be compared with the beauty that will be on every hand in heaven.

B. It Will Be Desirable.

Listen to these things concerning heaven:

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things (the things of earth) are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

"He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:1,2).

Earth's joys are marred by sorrow. We see sickness, pain, and death about us. We see tears, sorrows, and disappointments here. Were it not for these, earth would be a most desirable place to remain in. But, in addition to heaven being the beautiful place that it will be, it will exclude these blighting curses of earth. Health and happiness, peace and prosperity will reign over there. Yes, it will be desirable.

C. It Will Be Holy.

Here, the saint sees sin on every hand, for the whole world lies in wickedness, according to the apostle John (I John 5:19). Such is not the environment in which the saint enjoys living. How many times he has remarked how wonderful it would be to live in a place where there were no crimes, no dishonesty, and no impurity--a place where all loved each other, helped each other, and were honest, upright, Christian people. Well, heaven will be just such a place. Only God and His people will be there. Notice these passages telling of the holy company who will be there and of their spiritual activity:

"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).

"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13).

"I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:3).

"There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3,4).

When I think of the holiness of heaven, I can see the mistake of those who rush into religion, but do not really live for Christ. It will do them no good. I see the folly of those who go through the outward forms of Christianity while not really possessing the Spirit of God in their hearts. It will not suffice to gain them heavenly admittance. Those poor people who have not loved the Lord enough to open their mouths and sing His praises, to be regular in their attendance at all services of the church, and to engage themselves in the spiritual work of the church, they will find themselves barred from heaven's land, for here the lukewarm and unconsecrated cannot enter. Backsliders will not make it. Unconverted people will not make it. Heaven has been prepared for those preparing themselves for it.

III. Questions That People Ask About Heaven.

Children are known for asking questions. How they can bombard their parents with them! We can sympathize with the woman who had a child after her regular family had grown up. She found herself more easily worn down by the little fellow than she had with her former children. It seemed to her that he came well equipped with questions. One day when she was near the breaking point, she said to him, "Son, you really are full of questions." She about had to sit down when the little fellow shot back, "Mamma, what's a question?" Well, grown-ups turn children when it comes to asking questions about the great beyond. Here are three commonly asked questions that we would like to deal with before bringing this study to a close.

A. Will There Be Differences Of Reward In Heaven?

There are some passages that might seem to indicate that there will be, such as Luke 19:15-19 and I Cor. 3:12-15. Then, there are other passages that seem to say there won't be, such as Matt. 20:8-12. We know all will either be rewarded alike, or they will be rewarded differently. It would have to be one or the other. From my studies, I personally favor the idea that there will not be differences of rewards in heaven. I very much appreciated the material Brother Barber set forth upon this point on one of his "Querists' Pages" in Volume 1 of "The Voice of Evangelism" (November 30, 1946). But, let me say that if God sees fit to reward differently, that is up to Him, and it will be all right with me. I believe that whatever He might do, He will have a just reason for doing whether I understand it ahead of time or not. I know I can say without fear of contradiction that if the Bible teaches a difference in heavenly rewards, the Bible does not emphasize that teaching. Rather, it emphasizes the matter of getting to heaven and missing hell. The older one gets in the faith and the more he or she does for God, I have noticed a less concern about special rewards and a greater concern to make sure of heaven and to see that others get there too.

I have detected time and time again a dangerous thought among some who hold the idea that there will be differences of rewards in heaven. I have known people to say concerning the fact that they weren't as faithful as others and weren't doing as much as others: "Well, I'll just settle for a smaller reward." Yes, quite a little less! The Bible doesn't say that anybody unfaithful will even get to

heaven. If a person thinks he or she can do less than what one is able to do and at the same time still reach heaven, that person has another think coming! Such a person could be no better classed than lukewarm--not cold, but surely not hot either (Rev. 3:16)--and the lukewarm are to be rejected and not saved.

B. Will We Know Each Other In Heaven?

Though the Bible does not treat this at length, I believe it gives us enough material by which to draw a definite conclusion. I believe we shall know each other there. I Thess. 4:13-18 is a fine passage upon this point. The Thessalonian Christians had somehow gotten it into their heads that the living saints would go to heaven before those saints who had passed on. Thus, they would miss seeing their dead loved ones. But, Paul corrected the idea by telling them the dead saints would be resurrected first of all, and then they with the living saints would be caught up together to meet the Lord. He closed by saying to comfort one another with these words. How would they be comforted? By knowing they would be reunited with their dead at the time of Jesus' return. What comfort would that be if they would not know each other at that time? There are other considerations in the Scriptures, but this has always been one of the best in my judgment.

C. How Can I Be Happy When I Know Some Of My Loved Ones Aren't There?

Here is a problem that bothers many people. All of us have some loved ones who are not Christians. In some cases, it may be a husband; in others, a wife; in others, parents; in still others, children, or brothers, or sisters, or very close friends. People say: "I know I couldn't enjoy one moment of heaven if I knew any of my loved ones were in hell."

Whether we can understand how we can be without tears in heaven when some of our loved ones are in hell, we can know that God has said there will be no tears in heaven (Rev. 21:4), and I believe it. Notice that it says *God* will wipe away all tears. He can do wonderful things. He will have His way of doing it. He may have to blot the knowledge of unsaved loved ones clear out of our memories in order to wipe tears from our eyes. I know He will have His way of doing it, and I know it will be done. The grandeur and glory of heaven may so fascinate us as to cause us to forget all about the earth, too.

As we bring this study toward a close, let us remember that Jesus is coming, and when He does, He is coming to reward His people. Rev. 21:12 says:

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me."

It is natural for heat to rise. It is natural for a thirsty horse to drink. It is natural for a sleepy man to go to bed. Have you ever thought that there is law and order with God? What He sees men desiring, He will give them an eternity of it. If they love sin, He will give them eternal death (the wages of sin). If they prefer the devil to God, He will cast them into hell forever with the devil. If they desire the fellowship of sinners, He will let them have an eternity with them. If they have despised spiritual things and the

company of spiritual people, they will never be bothered with them again, for in hell, there will be no spirituality (no Bible reading, no preaching, no urging to live right), and there will be no spiritual people there. If they have preferred the devil's words to God's Word, they will get to be with their master. But, if men have hated sin, loved God, sought righteousness, obeyed God, and lived for God, then He will give them an eternity of their own choosing. No sin will harass them in heaven, God, whom they love, obey, and live for will be there with them. Righteousness, which has been their law of life, will be the rule of heaven. Notice how all this is borne out in Rom. 2:6-9:

"(God) who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

Yes, God is watching what you are desiring, what you are living for. He is letting you pick out your own eternity. And whatever you choose, you will have to accept. Be deeper, then, in your life than merely trying to fool a preacher or the people. Live for God if you would miss hell and inherit heaven. If you have not turned from sin in an acceptance of Christ, why do you not do so without delay? Immediately, turn from your sins in repentance, confess your faith in Jesus Christ before men, be immersed in obedience to Christ that your sins might be blotted out and that you might enter into the Christian life in which you continue steadfastly until death calls you home. You will never regret, either in time or eternity, that you have pursued such a course. The ways of the world may be alluring, but remember where those ways lead, and you will find them as abhorrent to you as bitter poison. The apostle John called upon the people of his day not to love the world, and he told them why. I use his statement as a fitting conclusion to this entire series of studies, asking that you give his statement due consideration in the light of eternity. He said:

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17).

When a king asked Euclid whether he could not explain his art to him in a more compendious manner, he was answered that there was no royal road to geometry.

Other things may be seized by might or purchased with money, but knowledge is to be gained only by study and personal application. This is why many are content with a very meager knowledge of the Bible.

Questions Over The Unfolded Plan of God

THE GOD BEHIND THE PLAN

1. List the three characteristics of God that were considered in this lesson.
2. How do we know that God has bestowed His mercy upon man?
3. How do earthly provisions for sinner and saint alike show the mercy of God?
4. Give another proof of God's mercy by completing I Jn. 3:1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, _____."
5. What Bible book speaks much of the virtues of wisdom?
6. Where do we find God's wisdom manifested?
7. Give one reason for God's supreme wisdom.
8. Why has God not revealed to man all that He could have?
9. What would happen to mercy if it were not combined with justice?
10. How was God's justice upheld at Calvary?
11. What must of necessity be done at Judgment to maintain the justice of God?
12. What does Rom. 2:16 reveal as an attribute of God as a result of His justice?
13. Memorize Isa. 55:7.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED

1. Prove the participation of all the Godhead in creation from Gen. 1:1.
2. Who are the "us" and "our" in Gen. 1:26?
3. What are three possible views of creation?
4. What does the Hebrew word translated "create" mean?
5. Why does the evolution theory fail?
6. Can you reconcile creation and evolution? Why or why not?
7. What do modernists contend as to the writing of Genesis 1 and 2?
8. What is true of the writing of Gen. 1 and 2?
9. What argument is used to prove a "second creation" account beginning with Gen. 1:2?
10. Deal with the Isa. 45:18 argument using your Bible.
11. What argument is involved in the use of the word "replenish" (Gen. 1:28)?
12. Answer the argument by defining "replenish".
13. Give at least two reasons to refute a "day" of creation extending over a long period of time.
14. How could three "days" have passed before the creation of the sun when time is actually marked out by the sun?
15. What three attributes of God are demonstrated in creation?
16. Memorize Psa. 33:8.

MAN AS HE WAS IN THE BEGINNING

1. How long has man been in existence according to Ussher?
2. How does man differ from all other things of creation?

3. How is man made in "the image of God"?
4. Why did God make man?
5. Is it wrong for man to use modern medicine, machines, and an education?
6. List at least four blessings that man gained when God placed him upon the earth.
7. Why has man failed to subdue all things?
8. What further help has God given to man in the task of subduing all things?
9. How can the redeemed gain dominion?
10. Memorize Gen. 1:27.

THE FIRST SIN

1. What one prohibition did God place upon Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden?
2. What caused them to sin?
3. How is the devil pictured throughout God's Word?
4. Where did the devil come from?
5. How does all humanity suffer because of Adam's sin?
6. Has his sin been passed on to us?
7. What present-day church doctrines have been formed because of the "inherited sin" theory?
8. How did Eve's deception reflect on her character?
9. How did Adam's sin reflect upon him?
10. What did Adam and Eve do that is characteristic of every sinner today?
11. Designate the two ways that one might sin.
12. Analyze the nature of man's first sin.
13. Memorize II Cor. 11:3

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FIRST SIN

1. Upon whom did the consequences of the first sin fall?
2. What five personal consequences of their sin came upon Adam and Eve?
3. How did God curse the ground?
4. How did the sin of Adam and Eve affect successive generations?
5. How did the sin of Adam and Eve affect the devil and his program?
6. Explain the meaning of "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:16).
7. Explain "It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).
8. Memorize II Cor. 5:10.

PATRIARCHAL RELIGION

1. Divide the era of Biblical history into the three dispensations commonly accepted.
2. List the beginning and closing event of each dispensation.
3. What were some of the elements which constituted Patriarchal religion?
4. What was probably man's very first religious act unto God?
5. What was the first religious rite given to any one portion of humanity?
6. What was the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals before the flood?
7. How do we conclude that God must have given laws before Sinai though they are not recorded?
8. What part did the father have in the Patriarchal religion?

9. How did the Patriarchs learn God's will concerning their manner of worship?
10. Memorize Gen. 6:5

THE GREAT FLOOD

1. How does it happen that every nation (whether heathen or Christian) seems to have an account of a great flood in its history?
2. How bad was the condition of men's hearts just preceding the flood?
3. How long, after creating the earth, did God destroy it?
4. Describe the character of Noah and his standing before God.
5. What light is thrown upon the character of Noah through New Testament Scriptures?
6. Describe the real import of the flood upon the earth.
7. What is the ark of safety provided for men today?
8. Compare the salvation of the eight souls then with the salvation of souls today. (I Pet. 3:21).
9. Memorize Gal. 6:7,8.

POST-FLOOD HAPPENINGS

1. What was the first thing that Noah did after the flood?
2. How does the Bible describe a pleasing offering?
3. How does the Bible describe an unacceptable sacrifice?
4. What was God's covenant with Noah?
5. How did God establish it?
6. Why did God decide against so purging the earth again?
7. List some of God's special post-flood instructions which still pertain to mankind today.
8. What was the devil's first act upon the earth's population after the time of the flood?
9. What other things occurred that brought the displeasure of God upon men?
10. Where do we read of the conditions that prevailed in the Gentile world?
11. What was the prophecy of Noah concerning his sons?
12. How have these prophecies been fulfilled?
13. Memorize Rom. 1:21,22

ABRAHAM'S PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD

1. Of what special significance is the call of Abraham?
2. Describe the outstanding characteristic of Abraham.
3. What were some proofs of this characteristic?
4. List some of the promises which God made to Abraham.
5. List some of Abraham's descendants who fulfill God's promise of his becoming a great nation.
6. Who are the spiritual descendants of Abraham?
7. When was it that Abraham became approved of God?
8. Memorize Rom. 2:28,29.

ISAAC'S PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD

1. Why is Isaac's place in Bible history so important?
2. What incident in Isaac's life was used as an allegory to teach a great Bible truth?
3. What did Paul teach by use of this incident?
4. List a few of the interesting incidents in Isaac's life.

5. What significance does the deliverance of Isaac (at the time he was to be sacrificed) hold for us?
6. What can we know of Isaac's character from these incidents in his life?
7. Memorize Gal. 4:30,31.

JACOB'S PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD

1. Give instances proving God's choice of Jacob to be the one through whom the Abrahamic promises were fulfilled.
2. Who were the twelve patriarchs?
3. What place of importance do they occupy in Bible history?
4. What were the two names given to Jacob and what is each's meaning?
5. How did Jacob's prophecies concerning his sons weed out all but Judah?
6. In what way did the blessing of pre-eminence come to be fulfilled in Judah?
7. What is the accepted meaning of "shiloh" (Gen. 49:10)?
8. What reason could be given as to why Jacob was chosen rather than Esau?
9. Give reasons as to whether Jacob's life was or was not altogether righteous.
10. Memorize Gen. 49:10.

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

1. What prophecy was given to Abraham as he slept which had reference to his descendants?
2. How did the Israelites happen to be in Egypt?
3. Enumerate events in Joseph's life which promoted him to a position of authority in Egypt.
4. Enumerate events in Jacob's life which brought about the move to Egypt.
5. How did the Israelites come to be in bondage to the Egyptians?
6. What measures were employed by the Egyptians against the Israelites?
7. Why did these fail?
8. Memorize Gen. 15:13.

DELIVERED FROM EGYPTIAN BONDAGE

1. Who was God's agent of deliverance for His people?
2. Tell something of his family.
3. How was he brought into the position of receiving such a good education?
4. Where did Moses go at the age of forty?
5. What did this involve as a serious decision in his life?
6. Tell of the events which took place in Midian.
7. What were the plagues that God sent upon the Israelites?
8. What was the prophecy of Joseph that was fulfilled at this time?
9. Narrate the exodus.
10. After the Israelites had crossed the sea, what happened to the Egyptians?
11. Tell of the effect of this incident among surrounding nations.
12. How does Israel's deliverance compare with our deliverance from sin?
13. Memorize Heb. 11:24-26.

THE LAW GIVEN AT SINAI

1. What was it that guided the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan?

2. What did God command Moses to do to make the bitter waters of Marah sweet again?
3. What food was given to the Israelites in the wilderness?
4. What was the significance of its name?
5. What two important events took place at Rephidim?
6. How long had the Israelites been in their journey from Egypt to Sinai?
7. List the circumstances which surrounded the giving of the Law.
8. What happened during the time that Moses was on the mount?
9. What was the outcome of this act?
10. At what date was the Law given?
11. For how long did it last?
12. Prove its duration.
13. List some of its principles which have been legislated against in the New Testament.
14. Memorize Col. 2:14.

THE CONTENTS OF THE LAW

1. Where do we find the ten commandments listed in the Scriptures?
2. Write the shortened form of all ten.
3. What is the position of the Seventh Day Adventists on the ten commandments?
4. What New Testament passage confirms that the laws on the tables of stone passed away?
5. Will the ten commandments save us?
6. What reason could there have been for two tables of stone being used to record the ten commandments?
7. List the various kinds of laws contained in the laws given to the Israelites.
8. Give one example of each kind of law included.
9. What did Jesus give in answer to the question, "What is the greatest commandment?"
10. Give examples of those faithful and those not faithful to keep the Law.
11. Memorize Matt. 22:37-40

THE TABERNACLE

1. Where do we read of the pattern, construction, erection, and dedication of the tabernacle?
2. Why is the study of the tabernacle important?
3. Discuss the pattern of the tabernacle.
4. How were the materials of the tabernacle secured?
5. Who helped construct the tabernacle?
6. Where in the New Testament do we read concerning the tabernacle and that which it foreshadowed?
7. Show the fulfillment of the high priest and other priests.
8. List each piece of furniture in the tabernacle and give the fulfillment of that which each typified.
9. Memorize Heb. 10:22

THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

1. How did it happen that the tribe of Levi was chosen to be the priestly tribe?
2. What three groups besides the family of Aaron had places of responsibility in the religious life of the Israelites?
3. Distinguish between "priests" and

"Levites".

4. What might the garments of the priests prefigure as to the New Testament priesthood?
5. What was done with the blood of the "ram of consecration" and why was it done?
6. Who challenged the priesthood of Aaron and what resulted?
7. List three qualifications of a priest.
8. What were some specific instructions to the priests regarding their duties?
9. What happened when these special instructions were violated?
10. How did God care for the Levites since they had been given no inheritance of land?
11. How has the priesthood been changed today?
12. Memorize Heb. 4:14-16.

OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES

1. List the principle sacrifices for the Mosaic dispensation.
2. Explain the burnt offering.
3. Explain the meal offering.
4. How were proper sacrifices chosen?
5. Why would God want people to go to so much "bother" as the sacrifices demanded?
6. Why could these sacrifices not take away sin?
7. What did these sacrifices accomplish?
8. How, then, can those who lived in Old Testament times ever be saved from their sins?
9. Memorize Heb. 9:15.

THE THREE GREAT JEWISH FEASTS

1. Name the three great feasts and their dates.
2. Where were they to be observed?
3. Discuss the names and manner of observing the other feasts.
4. Where was the first Passover Feast observed?
5. By what other names is this feast known?
6. What exceptions were made as to its observance?
7. List three ways in which the term "passover" is used.
8. How does the Greek word for Pentecost explain the time when it was observed?
9. List other names for this feast.
10. What was the purpose of the feast of Pentecost?
11. What was the double purpose in the feast of Tabernacles?
12. What is its other name?
13. Name various events in the life of Jesus which occurred at the time of the Passover Feast.
14. Memorize Lk. 22:29,30.

ISRAEL CONDEMNED IN THE WILDERNESS

1. From what place did Moses send the spies into Canaan?
2. How many spies were sent?
3. How were they chosen?
4. Why were they sent?
5. For how long did they remain in the land?
6. What did they report upon their return?
7. Describe the reaction of the people when they heard the report of the spies?
8. What did Caleb and Joshua reply to the people?

9. Give the gist of God's penalty imposed because of the unbelief of His people.
10. What caused the concern exhibited by Moses?
11. What was God's answer to Moses' prayer?
12. Which people were to go on into Canaan?
13. How did God determine the time appointed for His people to wander in the wilderness?
14. What happened to the ten unfaithful spies?
15. What did the people do after this that again brought God's hand of wrath against them?
16. Give New Testament references relating to the possibility of our falling from God's grace as Israel did.
17. Memorize Heb. 3:12,13.

THE CONQUEST UNDER JOSHUA

1. Why is the book of Numbers so named?
2. Why was a new leader chosen for God's people?
3. Who was chosen?
4. Tell something of his previous associations with the Israelites and Moses.
5. Break down the word, "Deuteronomy" to give its meaning.
6. What is included in the book of Deuteronomy in addition to laws?
7. List Moses' final instructions to the people.
8. Where did he die?
9. Briefly relate the entrance of the two spies into Jericho.
10. Describe the crossing of the Jordan.
11. What important provision of God was cut off after the people crossed Jordan? Why?
12. Give proof against unbeliever's arguments as to the impossibility of the fall of Jericho.
13. Give archaeologists' account of the ruin of the walls and the fire after they fell.
14. What evidence do we have proving God's authority as to the rebuilding of Jericho?
15. Why did Israel fail to capture Ai?
16. How was the land divided in Joshua's old age?
17. How old was Joshua when he died?

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

1. What commandment did Israel fail to obey?
2. When did their rebellion toward this commandment begin?
3. What did God do to punish the people?
4. How did the rule of the judges come to have a place in God's plan?
5. How many judges were there?
6. What type of men were they?
7. For what length of time did they rule?
8. What important request was made at the end of this period?
9. Why did this happen?
10. What did the request indicate?
11. What did God do?
12. How did it bring sorrow?

ISRAEL'S FIRST THREE KINGS

1. Name the first three kings of Israel.
2. For how long did each reign?
3. Of what tribe was Saul?

4. What good characteristic was evidenced in his early life?
5. What was his first battle?
6. What things led to his downfall?
7. What do we know of David's early life?
8. List some outstanding things about his reign.
9. Tell of his terrible sin and the evil brought to him by it.
10. Why was Solomon not in line for the throne?
11. What was his famous choice?
12. List important things concerning his reign--both good and bad.

THE KINGDOM AFTER IT DIVIDED

1. Who was Jeroboam?
2. What "object lesson" was presented to Jeroboam?
3. What did Jeroboam do that brought trouble to the kingdom?
4. How did Jeroboam come to be king?
5. Why did Jeroboam set up the idolatrous worship of the north?
6. What became of it?
7. Who else brought a rapid decline in the kingdom of Israel? How?
8. What servant of God was sent to rebuke these things?
9. What prophet actually destroyed Baal worship?
10. How was this accomplished?
11. What two men prophesied that the northern kingdom would fall?
12. What happened to the southern kingdom after the fall of the northern kingdom?
13. What prophet lamented the death of Josiah?
14. What king ruled when the south fell?
15. List those who prophesied to the southern kingdom before its fall.
16. Describe the fall of the South.
17. How long had it been in existence?

THE RESTORATION PERIOD

1. Name some of the captives from the southern tribes who were slaves in Babylon.
2. Why were the later years of captivity better for the Jews than the first?
3. What lesson did the captivity bring to the Jews?
4. What probably cured them of idolatry?
5. Give two accounts of prophecy relating to the Jews' return to their own land.
6. How many Bible books deal with the return?
7. Name them.
8. List three important characters of the return and their work.
9. Why did God allow them to return? (Give two reasons).
10. What specific things pertaining to the Mosaic ordinances were reinstated in the religious life of the people who returned?
11. How long had it been since these ordinances were first given?
12. What one very evident fact is pointed out to us by the restoration period?

THE PROPHETS FORESAW THE MESSIANIC AGE

1. To what period do the Messianic prophecies actually relate?
2. What one fact is especially important to our study and understanding of prophecy?

3. How many times is there a prediction of Christ's coming in the Old Testament Scriptures?
4. List some specific things foreseen by the Old Testament prophets relating to Christ's coming.
5. Give two familiar passages which predict Christ's crucifixion.
6. What are some of the things which the prophets foresaw concerning the Christian dispensation?
7. What prophet told of Jesus' being crowned?
8. What prophet told of the day of Pentecost?
9. What prophet spoke of a new covenant?
10. What prophet vividly predicted Gentile conversions?
11. How can we relate Zech. 6:14 and Eph. 2:11-13? (Use your Bible).
12. What Old Testament prophet is quoted many times in the New Testament concerning his teaching justification by faith?
13. What prophet predicted the coming of the "day of the Lord"?
14. What does that expression mean?
15. Who prophesied of a future resurrection of all?

THE MESSIAH IS BORN

1. What was the event from which everything was dated prior to the system of our present calendar?
2. From what event does our present calendar date?
3. Name the trend of thought that denies the virgin birth of Christ.
4. Explain "virgin" birth.
5. Why is the virgin birth so important?
6. What is significant about the humble parentage of Jesus?
7. What design was in God's plan as He gave to us a record of Jesus' first visitors?
8. Who gave the first prophecy of opposition against Jesus?
9. When was it given?
10. To whom was it given?
11. Of what significance was the prophecy to Mary?
12. When did the opposition actually begin?
13. What date do we have given to us as Jesus' birthdate?
14. Why is December twenty-fifth given to us as the correct date?
15. What do we have recorded in the Scriptures as to the observance of this as the date of His birth?

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

1. Where do we find the genealogy of Jesus recorded?
2. Why did Matthew trace Jesus' ancestry through David?
3. Why did Luke trace the line all the way back to Adam?
4. Why does Matthew trace the lineage through Joseph?
5. Why does Luke trace the lineage through Mary?
6. Why were certain omissions made in the genealogy of Matthew?
7. List at least five good people in the line of Christ.
8. List some of the bad people in the line.
9. What two Gentiles are in the lineage?
10. What does this indicate?
11. What good argument for the Messiah's having already come is evi-

denced by the Jewish records of genealogy?

12. Why could a Messiah to come not be identified?

THE FORERUNNING MINISTRY OF JOHN

1. Why do all the writers except John refer to the forerunner of Christ as "John the Baptist"?
2. Why was he called "the Baptist"?
3. How was John related to Jesus?
4. What association could there have been between the two during boyhood days?
5. What were some of the ways that John was unusual?
6. How did the ministry of John parallel that of Elijah?
7. Why did he not perform miracles during his ministry?
8. What was his message?
9. What was his chief mission?
10. What was the response to his ministry?
11. Why did his preaching gain such a response from the people?
12. What statement did Jesus make concerning the leaders' rejection of John's message?
13. What happened to John because of his rebuke against Herod?
14. What temptation came into John's life?
15. What was his final fate?
16. What was the duration of his life?

JESUS' BAPTISM AND TEMPTATIONS

1. Where did John do his baptizing?
2. Locate the place as being Southern by the reasons given in the lesson.
3. How far did Jesus walk to be baptized?
4. Why did Jesus wait until John had preached for a while to be baptized?
5. How do we know that Jesus was immersed?
6. What does Luke record concerning Jesus' coming out of the water?
7. What event immediately followed Jesus' baptism?
8. Why did this happen?
9. How was this a sign to John?
10. Define "Messiah".
11. What other important thing that happened at Jesus' baptism?
12. What was the devil's purpose in tempting Jesus?
13. What was God's purpose in Jesus' temptations?
14. List the three temptations in the wilderness.
15. How did Jesus combat the devil's temptations?
16. Name other temptations which Jesus had to face.
17. How was He strengthened for them?
18. Memorize James 1:7 and James 4:8.

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

1. What was the length of the ministry of Jesus?
2. For how long was Jesus on earth after His resurrection?
3. Where did He preach?
4. Was He ever preaching at any other place outside this area?
5. Why?
6. What were some of Jesus' claims?
7. What did His miracles prove?
8. Give three reasons as to why Jesus was a master teacher.
9. What one phase of Jesus' teachings especially showed wisdom in getting

the "point across".

10. How were the teachings of Jesus so different from those of an ordinary teacher?
11. List at least five things that Jesus taught about the kingdom.
12. What one thing did Jesus teach to be an impossibility?

JESUS AS JUDGED BY OTHERS

1. What was one of the most frequent charges thrown against Jesus by the enemy?
2. List at least four other charges which were brought against Jesus.
3. What were two occasions of His being criticized by friends?
4. Give at least five of those people who testified to His deity.
5. List five of those who declared the innocence of Jesus.

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

1. What were men commanded to preach? (Mk. 16:15).
2. Why is it so important that nothing but the gospel is preached? (Rom. 1:16).
3. Summarize the gospel as Paul does in I Cor. 15:3,4.
4. What does the word "gospel" mean?
5. If God had planned Jesus' death, why were the men who crucified Him held guilty?
6. Give evidence of the fact that when Jesus died He bore the guilt of our sins.
7. Who all profited by the death of Christ?
8. What two important ordinances commemorate Christ's death?
9. How do we figure the approximate time of Jesus' burial?
10. What Old Testament book contains a prediction of His burial?
11. Where was He buried?
12. What Scripture reveals to us that baptism is a burial?
13. Give one reason against the substitution of sprinkling for immersion.
14. List at least three important facts relating to the resurrection of Jesus.
15. What early Christian writers stated that Sunday was the day of Jesus' resurrection?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASCENSION

1. How were the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension spent?
2. How do we know that Jesus no longer has a fleshly body?
3. Give three arguments against the thought that the change in Jesus' body took place at the resurrection.
4. How did the ascension of Jesus relate to His priesthood?
5. How can He help us in the time of temptations?
6. When was God's Kingdom to be set up?
7. Who was promised the throne?
8. When did He receive the glory?
9. What passage of New Testament Scripture tells us these things?
10. What is the denominational idea of Jesus' coronation?
11. How is our justification related to the ascension?
12. Memorize Dan. 2:44.

THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST

1. Define "disciple".
2. Define "apostle".
3. How many apostles were there?
4. Name as many as you can.
5. How did Jesus contact those who became His apostles?
6. How did Jesus prepare the apostles for their work?
7. How important was the office of apostleship?
8. What was the scope and duration of their ministry?
9. Explain John 20:23.
10. Give two reasons for the apostles' need of supernatural help.
11. What help was given to them?
12. What special help was given to confirm their preaching?
13. Where did their work begin?
14. What was the message given to the people through the apostle Peter?
15. What was the result?
16. How were the apostles' exhortations to various congregations preserved for us?
17. How does the work Jesus had planned for them go on yet today?
18. Memorize Matt. 28:18-20.

THE "CHURCH-AND-KINGDOM" QUESTION

1. What is the "church-kingdom" position taken by denominationalism?
2. In what two ways is the "kingdom" referred to in the Scriptures?
3. Give one proof that Mk. 14:25 relates "the kingdom" and the "church".
4. Prove that the church is the kingdom on earth from Mk. 9:1.
5. Use Old Testament prophecy to prove that the kingdom has already come.
6. How do we know that Jn. 3:5 speaks of the church?
7. What passage in Matthew uses Jesus' own words to link the church and the kingdom?
8. When did Paul make mention of the kingdom?
9. When did John make mention of the kingdom?
10. Since the epistles were addressed to the Christians, (in the church) explain the passages referring to "the kingdom". (I Pet. 1:11, I Cor. 15:50, Matt. 8:11).
11. When will men inherit the kingdom?
12. Where does denominationalism teach this inheritance to be?
13. What does denominationalism do to the kingship of Christ?

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

1. What was the purpose of the law of Moses?
2. When did God abrogate the law?
3. Why is the law unable to save?
4. When did the gospel go into effect?
5. What is its duration?
6. What is the difference as to the authority of the law and the gospel?
7. What power lies in the gospel?
8. List four evidences from the New Testament which distinguish the gospel as having greater power than the law.

THE TWO SIDES OF SALVATION

1. What are the two sides of salvation?

2. What was God's view of man in the beginning?
3. What is modernism's description of man in the beginning?
4. How did Jesus find man when He came?
5. What fact proves that the devil did not succeed in damning all men, even though his power over man was very great?
6. Describe God's dealings with both Jew and Gentile.
7. What is man's part in partaking of salvation?
8. What will happen to those who do not obey the gospel?
9. What perfected Jesus as savior?
10. What must one do after the initial obedience to God's will has been performed?
11. Memorize Heb. 5:9.

THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION

1. What is the meaning of the term "conversion"?
2. Why is "conversion" a necessary thing?
3. Distinguish between "Christians" and "sinners".
4. How is conversion brought about according to the Scriptures?
5. How are man's outlook and desires changed?
6. How can his will be changed?
7. How can he have his guilt removed to be changed to purity before God?
8. Memorize Gal. 2:20.

THE DIVINE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

1. What is there in the great commission to prove the importance of baptism?
2. How many conversions are recorded in the book of Acts?
3. How many of these mention baptism?
4. List as many of the recorded conversions as you can.
5. What significant statements are made concerning baptism in Acts 2?
6. When did Saul become a saved individual? Give scripture.
7. What does baptism symbolize?
8. How does baptism picture a change being wrought within as the outward act is performed?
9. How does one get into Christ? Give two Scriptures as proof of your answer.
10. Memorize II Cor. 5:17.

THE NEW LIFE A PRODUCT OF CONVERSION

1. What is the result of conversion in one's life?
2. How do many preachers fail in making conversion clear?
3. How does faith lead to a new life in Christ?
4. What does repentance do to bring a new life?
5. What are some of the spiritual values received when an individual confesses Christ?
6. How does baptism lead to a new life?
7. Memorize Rom. 6:1-4.

CONTINUING STEADFASTLY

What was the first thing affirmed about the early Christian converts? Give one Scripture and one "common-sense" reason for continuing steadfastly in the faith.

3. What doctrine is advocated in contrast to the need for remaining steadfast?
4. Prove by the Scriptures that the doctrine of eternal security is false. (Give at least two arguments.)
5. Give at least three reasons that would prove the "once saved, always saved" theory to be ridiculous.
6. Memorize I Cor. 15:58.

THE SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK

1. Who is responsible for an individual's remaining faithful to Christ?
2. What title meaning "elder" shows him to be a shepherd?
3. What is the work designated to the elders that would cause them to be known as shepherds?
4. What prevailing attitude today concerning the eldership shows a rebellious spirit among the churches?
5. Why does the office of the elder suffer today?
6. Where are the qualifications for elders found in the Scriptures?
7. Memorize Heb. 13:17.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH

1. Give five reasons why we should seek the fellowship of the saints.
2. Why did Saul suffer hardship when he sought comfort from God's people?
3. List five reasons why others need our fellowship.
4. Why must the church practice dis-fellowship?
5. Use three proofs against too much freedom in fellowshipping others.
6. What should we do if we cannot find a group with whom we can conscientiously be identified?
7. Give examples of some who were punished for having fellowship with those who were not God's people.
8. Memorize II Jn. 10,11.

EVANGELISM, THE WORK OF THE WHOLE CHURCH

1. Who is responsible for the evangelization of the world?
2. Who is an "evangelist" in the Bible sense?
3. List four duties of the evangelist.
4. How has the method of evangelization in our present day changed from past methods?
5. How does an elder participate in the program of evangelism?
6. List five various responsibilities laid upon church members who are commanded to be evangelistic.
7. Why is evangelism so important?
8. Memorize Matt. 9:36-38.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS DIVINELY IMPORTANT

1. How is the importance of the Lord's supper shown to us?
2. What does the Lord's supper commemorate?
3. How is the Lord's supper a communion?
4. Does partaking of the Lord's supper have anything to do with the remission of sins?
5. What is the reference made by Jesus concerning eating and drinking the Lord's supper?
6. How was the Lord's supper prefigured?
7. What New Testament passage declar-

ing the faithfulness of early Christians shows to us the importance of the Lord's supper?

8. What New Testament passage shows the Lord's supper to be the center of the early Christians' assembly?
9. Prove a weekly observance of the Lord's supper from Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2, and I Cor. 11.
10. Memorize I Cor. 10:16.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

1. Distinguish between "praise" and "prayer".
2. What is our reason for praising God?
3. How can our praise be expressed to God? (List at least three ways).
4. What profit is there in a study of Old Testament men who prayed?
5. What is the basis for prayer?
6. Give three examples of and exhortations to steadfastness in prayer.
7. Give examples of three persons who were fervent in prayer.
8. Memorize James 5:16.

CHRISTIANITY'S DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC

1. Contrast heathen ideas of God and Christianity's view.
2. What unique teaching did Christianity bring concerning love?
3. What is one prevalent misconception of love?
4. List three phases of Bible love.
5. What was God's standard of love?
6. What was man's standard of love?
7. What does man's love for God involve?
8. Who must we include in the commandment, "Love thy neighbor"?
9. Give Jesus' standard of love for our fellowmen.
10. What are some things that Christians are not to love?
11. What is the condition of those who do not love as they should?
12. Memorize I Jn. 3:18.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

1. Define "primitive Christianity".
2. Give three reasons for our interest in primitive Christianity.
3. When did the Holy Spirit inspire men to guide the early church?
4. How has the respect for the authority of Christ in religion changed?
5. Contrast the preaching of the early church with today's method.
6. What was the simple organization of the early church?
7. What was the determining factor as to the naming of early Christianity?
8. How were baptism and the Lord's supper observed in the beginning days of Christianity?
9. What was the outlook of early Christianity toward other religions and sin?
10. Elaborate upon the way of life known to the early Christians.
11. Memorize Jude 3.

THINGS CONNECTED WITH THE RETURN OF JESUS

1. How long did Jesus stay on the earth after His first coming?
2. How will Jesus come to earth a second time?
3. What does the Bible have to reveal concerning the relation of

Jesus coming with the resurrection of the dead?

4. What will heaven be like after the resurrection?
5. What will happen to the people yet alive when Jesus comes?
6. What will be another great event that is prophesied to take place at Jesus' return?
7. Who will accompany Jesus to help in the judgment and punishment of the wicked?
8. Prove that the eternal home of the righteous is not to be upon this earth.
9. What will become of this present earth?
10. Memorize II Pet. 3:11.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

1. Give at least five examples of God's punishment of the wicked in days past.
2. What did Jesus say about God's punishment of the wicked?
3. What did God's servants have to say about His punishment of the wicked? (John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, and Jude).
4. Name some, listed by John, who will face the second death. (Rev. 21:8).
5. Memorize Rev. 20:15.

THE REWARD OF THE SAINTS

1. What is the reward of the saints in this life as Sons of God?

2. What are the possessions brought by justification with God?
3. What has God promised to supply for all His children?
4. Describe the inheritance promised the saints in the future.
5. Designate the "crowns" to be given to the saints.
6. Describe the beautiful picture of heaven.
7. Why should we desire heaven?
8. If there were a difference of rewards in heaven, what classification must be given to those who say, "I'll just settle for a smaller reward"?
9. What passage indicates that we will know each other in heaven?
10. Memorize Rev. 3:20.