

# TOPICAL BIBLE STUDIES

A Quarterly study of the Bible  
Especially Designed  
for use by  
**Women's Auxiliaries**



by  
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# TOPICAL BIBLE STUDIES

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## FOREWORD

The North American Baptist Association in annual session, March 1952, authorized the publication of a quarterly for use in our Women's Missionary Auxiliaries. This quarterly is designed to promote Bible study among these women, and to furnish a systematic method of doing so. It is hoped that our Auxiliaries will work toward a standard method of carrying on their work.

The person first selected to write this quarterly could not, for various reasons, carry out the task. This writer was asked to write it at a late date when the printer was already waiting for copy. I have had very little time to devote to it. Given more time in which to do it, I feel that the quality of the lesson material could be improved. This is especially true of the programs which had to be arranged hurriedly. I hope we can look forward to a better quarterly beginning the first of 1953.

It is not easy to prepare a quarterly of this kind. I realize that there is a wide variance in the way that our auxiliaries operate. This makes the planning of this task a difficult job. Nevertheless, I hope the work put into this quarterly will be a blessing to some. This is a work that has long been needed, and while I feel unworthy of the task, I am glad to offer these pages for what benefit they may be to our work in the North American Baptist Association.

Our Auxiliaries are a valuable asset to our work. Any preacher knows that. Eternity alone will reveal what they have meant to the Cause. May more of our women become active in the work of the Auxiliary in each local church.

Most of the Auxiliaries I am familiar with have a special program once a month, either in some member's home or at the church. Therefore, near the end of each month's study for the quarter will be found the outline for a special program. This outline is brief. But I believe if a serious effort is made to follow the outline and to properly develop the theme, that the program material will be beneficial. This foreword is being written before all the lessons have been completed, and while I am not sure, it may be possible to include some extra devotional material which can be used at any time.

The lessons are not dated because different Auxiliaries meet on different days, some meeting weekly and some twice a month, and maybe some meeting only once a month. By the lessons not being dated, but merely designated as lessons one, two, etc., the quarterly can be used by all, no matter when they meet. The program is arranged to come near the last part of each month. In this way it can be used whenever necessary by each local group.

It is hoped that these lessons will be used more or less as outlines, and that those who render parts from time to time will seek to give the part in their own words and not merely read their topics.

## STUDY 1

## The Christian Home: America's Fundamental Need

Scripture Reading: *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness (holy women), not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober (wise), to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed,*

Titus 2:3-5.

INTRODUCTION—The revival which society needs most today is not a revival of trade or commerce. It is not a revival of good government; it is not civic reform. It is not even a church revival; although this kind of revival is desperately needed, we must admit. The revival which society most needs today is the revival of an institution much older than these. Unless we have it we shall see the doom of real progress. I refer to the home. The revival which society most needs today is the revival of the Christian home.

The interests of the home are more important than the interests of commerce. Generally speaking, we have sold out, and to the lowest bidder, by sacrificing home sanctities and home joys for the idols of the world. Christian women should be "teachers of good things" to the end that much worldly influence should be counteracted.

## TOPIC 1. HOME DISCIPLINE.

The discipline of the home is more important than good government, because the discipline of the home is essential to good government. You cannot make good citizens out of people who have never been taught obedience.

The word of the Lord admonishes all of us to be obedient. In II Corinthians 10:5 we have these words: "*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*" Christ Himself subjected Himself to obedience. Philippians 2:8 says, "*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*"

Much of our trouble today is caused by the fact that the masses are not willing to submit to the restraints which God has placed upon the human creature. Peter speaks of such in II Peter 2:10. "*But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleannesses, and despise government (dominion), presumptuous are they, self-willed,*" etc. There is the trouble. People are "self-willed"; they want to live without the dominion of God over them. This is why there are so many broken homes and such a sad state of affairs generally. The sanctity of the home is more important than all the questions which center in racial integrity.

If our homes were Christian many problems would not arise which do arise in these days. People talk about safe-guarding the marriage relations. And, in most states, laws have been passed in an effort to guard against abuse of this relation. Why have such laws been passed? Because the marriage relation itself has been so abused, ignored and defiled that society is paying the price. We must begin further back than a physical examination if abuse of the marriage relation is to be avoided. Our benevolent and philanthropic work is splendid, and maybe necessary, but it has

been made necessary by the failure of another and an older institution to do its work—the home. If we had better homes, there would be less need of other institutions.

No matter how good an institution may be, it can never be as good as a home, and can never take the place of the home. The interests of the home are higher than the interests of the school. There is a sense in which both should work together in perfect sympathy and controlled by the same ideals, yet, the home must always transcend in importance the school. The home was placed on earth before the church, and while the church is one of the greatest institutions of God the home should be controlled by the same ideals. No revival in the church gets far enough, or lasts long enough, that does not reach into the home. Here again are two institutions that should work in harmony.

### TOPIC 2. THE HOME IN DECLINE.

That the Christian home is in a state of decline today is evident to anybody who knows what a Christian home is, and who pauses to investigate present-day conditions. The home as an institution is fighting for its life. The rush of modern life; economic conditions; the innumerable fads which claim our time, promising much and delivering nothing; the speed mania; and the recreation mania are all a menace to the quiet and simplicity without which true home life does not have a ghost of a chance. The unity of the home is difficult to maintain. The table used to be the social center, where all the family met at meal time, but nowadays they struggle in as the exigencies of social or other engagements permit.

*"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, and cleave it with the washing of water by the word, that he might sanctify self a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,"* Ephesians 5:23-30.

In this Scripture we have pointed out the sacred relationship between husband and wife. This sacred relationship is even likened unto the relationship between Christ and His church. If the present decline in the institution of the home is to be halted, it must be halted by a correct knowledge and understanding of their duties and responsibilities on the part of both husband and wife. The Scripture wherein we read "so let the wives be to their own husbands" does not mean that the wife is to be a chattel, or just another piece of property to the husband. This same Scripture admonishes the husband to love his wife. A wife is duty bound to obey the husband "in the Lord". She is not obligated to obey any directive that is not consistent with the word of God. These instructions were written to Christian people. It was taken for granted that the husband would be the right kind of a husband, a Christian husband.

The husband and wife can do much to halt the present decline in Christian homes by fulfilling their rightful place in the eyes of God.

### TOPIC 3. RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE HOME.

The importance of religious instruction in the home should not be overlooked.

II Timothy 1:5 gives us an example of how religious instruction in the home had a wholesome influence upon Timothy. The verse reads: *"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."*

Notice the word "first" in that verse. The grandmother Lois taught Eunice and Eunice instructed Timothy. This is according to God's plan. The most important element of the Christian home is the atmosphere of reverence. It is to the soul what sunlight is to the flower. No child's soul has a fair chance who is not taught the importance of prayer and the great truths of God and the future life. The family altar, it is sad to say, has about disappeared from our land. Yet, in days past and gone, it was responsible for children growing up and making good citizens, husbands and wives, who would preserve the same tradition in their own homes.

What is the religious life of your home? You probably provide well for your children's physical wants, but what about food for their souls? Failure to provide spiritual food is like sending your child on a long journey across a great desert without sufficient provisions for the trip. Beware of a prayerless home. Are you setting your children a Christian example? Are you sending them out to life's duties well fortified with Christian principles?

Many people think that if they leave their children enough money to be independent that it would be the best thing they could do. But it is not so. In fact, it might be the worst thing one could do. Money is the least thing one could leave them. Money sometimes becomes a curse. Did you ever hear of Christian ideals being a curse? The best heritage we could leave our children is that of Christian character and ideals. God help us to save our homes.

*"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

### TOPIC 4. A PRAYING MOTHER.

*"And there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother,"* John 19:25.

We need more praying mothers. The unselfish devotion of motherhood to children is the truest illustration of the Christian ideal of service. Many women of today, shirking motherhood, reach for other heights of fame. But no achievement is greater than the simple, unostentatious ministries of motherhood. A number of great men, including Luther, Mirabeau, Lord Macaulay, Spurgeon, etc., attribute their success to their mothers. The mothers of these men were praying mothers.

Suppose somebody should come into your city and ask who the greatest person was in your vicinity: most people probably would name a Mayor, a Senator, maybe a bank President, etc. But, in the final analysis, the greatest person in your city, or in any other locality, is that mother who can wrap her arms around a lost boy or girl and pray to God in their behalf, and GET AN ANSWER. I have often wondered, if a census of a great crowd were taken, how many praying mothers would be found. When all else has failed, the prayer of a Christian mother has brought many a prodigal home.

The motherless boy hasn't had a fair chance in the world; he has run the race with a handicap. But there are many boys and girls who are not motherless, yet are deprived of the joy of a mother's prayer simply because praying mothers are few. Talking about kings and emperors, here is an office far above either. The story is related of a son on his way to prison when his mother asked to speak to him. Instead of speaking to his mother the son bit off her ear. He was the worthless son of a worthless mother. She had robbed him of his birthright. He was not altogether to be blamed.

## TOPIC 5. A MOTHER'S WAGES.

*"Take this child and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages,"* Exodus 2:9.

The mother of Moses knew not that she was nursing the future deliverer of Israel. No doubt, she lived to be proud of the prominence of her son, Moses. No mother knows what influence her children will exert upon the world. Some live to see their sons and daughters bringing reproach upon their parents. But many more live long enough to enjoy the fact that their children have found places of usefulness in society. The wages paid Moses' mother was but a meager thing compared to the joy in her heart as Moses took his place as a leader. And so it is today.

The greatest wages a mother can enjoy are those that come to her because of the place her children occupy in society. This is especially true where the mother has instilled Christian principles and Christian ideals in her children. She has prepared them for the journey of life. But, I think, the greatest reward will come when mothers of all ages stand one day beyond the night of time and praise Him from Whom all blessings flow. The Christian mother has many rewards to look forward to in heaven.

But there are some mothers, so-called, that are wicked mothers like Jezebel of old. There are unnatural mothers who sell their children into sin. There are sin-cursed, rum-soaked mothers to whom no reward will come in the future life. Many of them are responsible for their own children traveling in the way of sin, and they must answer for it when God calls a halt to things as they now are. I wish I could believe that there are comparatively few in this class. But I am afraid that the number is all too great.

## QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. What did Jesus tell the man in Mark 5:19?
2. What did a mother make for her child in I Samuel 2:19?
3. What is a man who despiseth his mother called in Proverbs 1:18?
4. Name four things that are conducive to a happy Christian home.
5. How many faithful Women Followers of Christ can you name?
6. What home did Jesus honor with his presence many times?
7. Where did John take the mother of Jesus after the crucifixion?
8. What liberties were granted a bridegroom in Old Testament days. Deuteronomy 24:5.
9. What is the difference in a house and a home?
10. Do you think it a good idea to have daily Bible reading in your home?
11. What do you suggest as a remedy for bickering and strife in the home?
12. Do you think a home is what it ought to be if it is not a Christian home?
13. How many of Lot's family believed the warning and fled with him?
14. How old was Sarah when she died?
15. Where did Abraham bury her?
16. How old was Isaac before he married?
17. How did his father obtain a wife for him?
18. Do you think it is a mother's duty to take her children to Sunday school and church services?
19. Do you think it wise to place emphasis upon beauty culture to the neglect of spiritual culture?
20. Are you doing your best to make your home a happy home?

## STUDY 2

## Forgetting God

Scripture Reading: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver," Psalm 50:22.

INTRODUCTION—One definition of this word "forgetting" is to be unable to recall. Another definition implies wilful neglect. It is the latter one of which most of us are guilty. Many things have been forgotten by us, things which we shall never be able to recall in this life, but can anyone forget God? Probably we shall never forget the subject of God, yet there are many ways in which we do forget Him. We often forget Him in our actions and our deeds. It is this forgetfulness that causes God much concern, and it is this forgetfulness that we should seek to correct. The following parts have to do with the common things in which God is often forgotten. It is a characteristic of the wicked, or unsaved, to forget God in these things. But it should not be so among God's people. Israel was found guilty of this sin. Jeremiah 3:21 tells us, "A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God." Notice the word "perverted" in that verse. It means to "put to wrong use", especially in a religious sense. And that is just what we do when we fail to measure up to God's expectations of us. We are not using the opportunities and the other things which the Lord gives us.

## TOPIC 1. FORGETTING HIS COVENANT.

Deuteronomy 4:23 tells us how prone Israel was to do this very thing. "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee."

II Kings 17:38 contains another reprimand from the Lord: "And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other Gods."

We are living today under a covenant of grace, not under the covenant God made with Israel. Hebrews 8:13 tells us, "In that He saith, a new covenant, He made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." But as Israel of old failed to remember the covenant God made with them, even so we often forget God's covenant with us. Under the dispensation of mercy and grace, under which we live, there are no sacrifices and burnt offerings to be offered; rather we are urged to remember God's covenant made between Him and the Lord Jesus Christ, and to serve Him through love.

God is faithful to remember His covenants and promises. Luke 1:72 tells us, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he sware to our father Abraham." It had been a long time since God made this promise to Abraham, yet after a lapse of several hundred years we find the fulfillment of the promise. One of the most comforting thoughts imaginable is that "God remembers". God remembers to bless, God remembers to protect, God remembers to lead and direct. It is also true that God remembers our unfaithfulness and our forgetfulness, and how it must grieve Him to see these things in our lives. Thank God that the covenant under which His children are now living is an everlasting covenant. See Hebrews 13:20.

## TOPIC 2. FORGETTING HIS WORKS.

*"That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. . . They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; and forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them,"* Psalms 78:7-11.

This is the description of the Israelites who turned to other Gods after Jehovah had been so merciful to them. Psalms 106:13 informs us further, *"They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel."* How soon Israel forgot the mighty hand of God which delivered them from Egypt, and how soon we forget His works today. Many times we thank God for delivering us from adverse circumstances of life, but soon forget and go our way unmindful of our deliverance.

*"God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform."* God's ways are higher than ours. We cannot understand "all the ways that God must lead us to that blessed promised land." But we can remember His works and seek to follow where He leads. Maybe God has delivered you from some bad circumstances of life. Have you forgotten it? Is your heart filled with gratitude because of His works in your life?

The greatest work that God has performed in our life is that of salvation. Saved by grace, unmerited favor, made a child of God and a citizen of heaven, all without any righteousness of our own. This one thing alone should cause us to sing the praises of God for all time to come, and throughout all eternity. Paul expressed it well in Colossians 1:12-13, *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."*

## TOPIC 3. FORGETTING HIS WORD.

*"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed,"* James 1:25.

In Hebrews 6:5, we have a reference to the Word of God being the "good word". And so it is. It is good for us to study the Word of God because it is God's will to men. The Bible is the textbook of the ages and the handbook of the Christian. It contains the instructions to equip us for our journey through this world. It is the sword of the Spirit. How can we wage Christian warfare without the sword? No soldier would go into battle without his weapons, and a Christian should wield the sword of the Spirit in the Christian warfare.

Perhaps the most needed thing in our churches today is a diligent study of the Word of God by individual members. Many church members do not know whether their pastor is preaching the truth or not because they are not familiar enough with God's Word to recognize the truth. Any pastor would rather preach to people who study the Bible than to a group of people who take everything he says for granted. Many pastors, when they preach the truth, "step on somebody's toe"; yet they are preaching the truth, but somebody might not think so because they are not familiar enough with the Word of God to know.

Nobody ever graduated in the matter of studying God's Word, and they never will in this life. We are to be a student as long as God permits us to live in this world. *"Study to show thyself approved . . ."* should be practiced by every Christian. Psalms 119:105 says, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* If this is true then we need this lamp to enable us to avoid the rough places

along life's way. An informed Christian is a steadfast Christian. Let us read and study more.

## TOPIC 4. FORGETTING HIS BENEFITS.

*"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 loving-kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles,"* Psalms 103:2-5.

It is impossible to recall and name all the benefits that are ours as children of God. Some of the most outstanding ones should be always remembered.

It is a benefit for us to be able to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Public assembly and public worship is ordained of God, see Hebrews 10:25. God is not the only one who benefits from this kind of worship, the person who engages in such worship is benefited as much, if not more, than the Lord. One part of the physical body draws strength from another part of the body. So it is in the true church of the Lord, one member draws strength from other members. We cannot be spiritual hermits and expect to enjoy our salvation.

The presence of the Spirit in our lives is a benefit. John 15:16, *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."* Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. He cannot be here in bodily form. He has sent the Comforter to take His place. The Holy Spirit is just as real and just as much present with us as Jesus was present with His disciples while on earth. But when we forget this fact, we are not apt to feel the presence of the Comforter in our lives.

The providence of God is a benefit. Romans 8:28, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* The earthly parent watches over the child. Even more so God watcheth to his purpose." The earthly parent watches over the child. Even more so God watches over His own. Oftentimes He changes a distasteful circumstance of life into a blessing for His own people. We sometimes fail to see this, nevertheless it is true. Israel didn't understand everything, yet, God dealt with them in a providential way. We see this from Psalms 106:7, *"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea."*

## TOPIC 5. PROSPERITY TEMPTS US TO FORGET.

*"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day; Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all thy things multiply; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage . . ."* Deuteronomy 8:11-14. Once again, then Israel serves as an example. We have this same principle, a truth we are warned against, in the New Testament. We quote only one, Luke 12:15, *"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."*

Prosperity itself is not a sin. Having a fortune itself is not a sin. But when

money and prosperity serve to lead us aside from doing the will of God, then both these things are detrimental to our eternal welfare. Money itself is not evil—it is the love of money that leads to sin and crime. The best prosperity of all is found in I Timothy 6:6 where it says, “*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*”

The Scripture, Matthew 19:24, where it says, “*And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*” does not mean that a rich man cannot be saved, or that there are no rich people who are Christians. This simply means that a man cannot enter heaven because of his riches, and a secondary thought is that a rich man is apt to be concentrating upon his wealth instead of his relationship to God, and, therefore, will not enter the kingdom because he gives no thought to his eternal welfare. There are many other Scriptures in the New Testament which warn us of the deceitfulness of riches. To be eternally grasping for the wealth of this world is likely to occupy all our time and, therefore, to leave no time for the quiet meditations of the soul. This is dangerous. It is dangerous to saved and unsaved alike. It will cause the saved to suffer a loss of rewards, but it will cause the unsaved to remain unsaved and go out into a Christless eternity alone and without God. Beware that prosperity does not cause us to forget God.

#### TOPIC 6. AN UNREASONABLE THING.

“*Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone out from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?*” Jeremiah 2:5. This simple question means, has anyone ever found fault with God? Many have tried to, I’m sure. But truthfully, no person has ever found one iota of fault with God. If this is true, then there is no excuse for not walking in his ways.

In Isaiah 1:18, the Lord says, “*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*” God wants us to “reason together”. It is a reasonable thing that God asks when He asks us to forsake sin and follow Him. God never asks an unreasonable thing of anybody. And it is unreasonable for people to forget God and His will and His ways. God knows what sin will do to a human soul, therefore He lovingly asks us to forsake sin and come to Him for cleansing and purification.

It is reasonable when God asks His children, then, to walk in paths of obedience to Him. It is for our benefit that we do so. It is an unreasonable thing when we fail to do so. Who knows better what is best, the creature or the Creator?

It is a reasonable thing when God asks us to bring others to the Fountain that cleanses from all sin. It is an unreasonable thing when we fail to do so. Do we believe what we profess to believe, that all people who are without Christ are doomed to perish unless reached by the Gospel? If we really believe that—we ought to be doing something about it. It is unreasonable, especially to the worldly element, when we profess to believe something and fail to be earnest in the practice of what we believe. It is mockery when we profess to love God and then fail to walk in the paths of obedience to Him.

The North American Baptist Association was launched with a great spirit of missionary zeal. This zeal has increased much in our short history. Let us do all we can to increase it more and more in the days to come that we might be found at our post of duty when the Lord comes for His own. And His coming may be soon. These are distressing days, days of conflict, turmoil and trouble. Christ stands by to save and to comfort. Let us present Him to others at every opportunity.

#### TOPIC 7. TO FORGET IS TO BE UNGRATEFUL.

We usually remember our friends who are kind to us and who present us with gifts, but do we remember our greatest Friend of all? Paul was grateful, for he said in I Corinthians 9:15a, “*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*”

The gifts which we give each other in this world will soon perish and pass away, but the gifts which God presents to us shall be ours forever. None of us are thankful enough for the mercies God has sent our way. Do we, like Paul, thank God daily for God’s unspeakable gift in the person of His Son? Not to do so is to be an ingrate, and an ingrate is an object of pity.

Hebrews 13:15 says, “*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*”

We should be thankful for the hope of the resurrection. Paul says, I Thessalonians 15:57, “*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

We should thank God for triumph in Christ. “*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place,*” II Corinthians 2:14.

We should thank God for the privilege of prayer. “*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,*” Philippians 4:6.

#### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Can you remember some special mercies of God in your life for which you are grateful?
2. What is one of the best ways of showing gratitude to God for His blessings?
3. Do you think God is grieved by our forgetfulness?
4. Why is it that we are so forgetful and neglectful of the things of God?
5. What is a good remedy for this forgetfulness?
6. Should the Lord’s work be carried on in a slothful manner?
7. Does God have a right to expect obedience and faithfulness on the part of His people?
8. Does our often forgetfulness stem merely from our brain, or does part of it come from our heart?
9. Have you ever felt the presence of the Comforter in your life?
10. If so, is it not proof that God remembers to keep His promises?
11. If God is faithful what effect should it have upon us?
12. Do you think the unfaithful person will receive as many rewards as the faithful one?
13. What does the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18) teach?
14. How does the ordinance of the lord’s supper fit into this lesson?
15. What is a good Scripture to remember when Satan seeks to implant doubts in our minds about our salvation?
16. Do you think we can have perfect assurance of our salvation without some knowledge of the Word of God?
17. Why is our Lord called the Word in the first chapter of John?
18. What is the true worship which alone is acceptable to God?
19. After Christ’s resurrection the angel said that He would meet with His disciples in Galilee. Did Jesus remember?
20. What is the sin of procrastination?

## STUDY 3

## The Sin of Flattery

Scripture Reading: "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth (enticeth) with his lips," Proverbs 20:19.

Webster defines flattery as follows: "To shower praise or attentions upon, to gratify the recipient's vanity. To raise a hope or belief (especially an unfounded one)." Thus we see that flattery is false, insincere praise. It is closely akin to hypocrisy. To be insincere in anything is a great fault, to be insincere in our Christian endeavors is a great sin. If it were not for the vanity of people, flattery could not survive. Thus we see how vain the human race is when we see the prevalence of the sin of flattery.

Many times we do not mean to be flattering in our remarks; we are sincerely trying to be friendly and congenial. But flattery can be, and often is, carried to the extreme. It is carried to the extreme when the work of God is hindered by vain and insincere actions and remarks. Perhaps no other age has witnessed such vanity as we are now witnessing. The writer believes there is too much emphasis being placed upon vain things to the neglect of spiritual things. This is a costly sin. It is costing us the loss of souls, the loss of rewards, the loss of joy, and the loss of blessings. Let us be warned against too much flattery in both our home life and our public life, because flattery is not real, and it will not stand the test when placed in the crucible of truth.

We should be ourselves at all times, not seeking to present ourselves in a false light, because the sham will be perished by the light of truth.

## TOPIC 1. THE WICKED USE FLATTERY.

They use it towards others. Proverbs 29:5, "A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet." Many forms of flattery have been devised by the designing minds of men who wish to entice others. It is used in the commercial world to break down sales resistance. You can always know that back of insincere and vain flattery there is an evil design. Solomon grew tired of the vain things of the world and remarked, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." We are living in a vain age of a vain world when there is much sham and pretense, much glitter and glamour, and most of it fostered by evil design. Flattery is one of the greatest tools of this vain world by which we are led astray from sincere and quiet meditation of spiritual truths.

It is used by the wicked toward themselves. Psalms 36:2, "For he that flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful." This is the reason why we see so many people who are proud and "puffed up"—they flatter themselves. They think they are "it". Not only do they flatter themselves, they like to have others flatter them. Most people don't want a photograph that looks exactly like them, they want one that flatters them. It is well to remember that when God looks upon us, and upon our lives, He sees the unretouched picture. While He looks upon us through the eyes of love and mercy and grace, yet He sees us just exactly as we are—not as a photograph that has been touched-up and the blemishes removed.

The sincere Christian should make every effort to avoid excessive flattery. To be friendly and congenial is a noble trait. But our friendliness should be based upon a sincere appreciation of the virtues found in the other person—not on the vain

things which shall pass away with the passing years. The fads and the fashions of this age and this world will pass away, but the word of our God shall abide forever.

## TOPIC 2. HYPOCRITES USE IT.

They use it towards God. Psalms 78:36, "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." Here is a case where people neglected all the precepts of God and refused to walk in His way, yet they professed to honor Him with their mouths. But the same verse tells us that they lied with their tongues. The following verse tells us that, even though their hearts were not right with God, yet, being full of compassion, He forgave them.

There are many like these people today—professing to love God with their lips while their hearts are filled with the vain things of the world. Jesus speaks of such in Matthew 15:8: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

This class of professed Christians try to flatter God into thinking that they are pretty good people. They like to remind God of the few little things they have done that are in line with God's will. They do things for praise and vain glory. Like the Pharisee, in the story of the Pharisee and the Publican, they like to remind God that they are not like other people, etc. God is not pleased with such an attitude. It is rank hypocrisy to profess God with the lips and then have our hearts filled with the vanities of this world.

Delilah flattered and enticed Samson, an event that ended in tragedy for all concerned. When our efforts stem from flattery in anything we can expect the consequences to be tragic to all. Job knew well what he was talking about when he said in Job 17:5, "He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail."

## TOPIC 3. FALSE TEACHERS USE IT.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines (notice the word 'doctrines') which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,"

Romans 16:17-18.

Always beware of those teachers that come with "good words and fair speeches" who seek to take away old doctrines and implant new ones in our midst. Many times they approach us with the false premise that we are living in a new age and, therefore, should throw away some of our established customs, and even some of our doctrines, and be brought up to date with modern methods. Modern methods are all right as long as they do not do away with the fundamentals of the faith and the sacred principles entrusted to us by the head of the church, Jesus Christ.

Psychology is the science that deals with the mind. It is much in vogue today. I suppose some of it is all right. But there is a branch of it that is nothing more nor less than applied flattery, seeking to break down and to do away with some of the sacred principles of God's word. Many people today judge the individual by that person's personality. The individual who can put on a false front and exhibit what the world has come to call a good personality can influence people. But he can have a good personality and his heart be as black as midnight in the sight of God. His good personality, if not natural and sincere, can be used to influence people in that which is wrong. It can even be a stumbling block in the way of people being brought to



God. Job said, Job 32:21, "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man."

#### TOPIC 4. MINISTERS SHOULD NOT USE IT.

"For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness," I Thessalonians 2:5.

If there is anything clearly evident in the New Testament it is that Paul and other early preachers relied, not upon flattery and psychology, but upon the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring people to God. We should be kind in our approach. We should be thoughtful and tactful. We should avoid giving offense to any. But at the same time, it is the gospel that we need to carry to others.

In this present age, we should be especially careful that we do not substitute something else for the gospel. We are told in II Timothy 4:2-3, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." How this prophecy has been literally fulfilled. There are those today who like to have their ears tickled with fables—and that is about all some preachers speak from the pulpit.

A minister's place is to preach the gospel—not relate fables. It is good for a minister to have a good personality if it is not an effected personality. It is good for a minister to be friendly and courteous. It is good for him to welcome every person who comes into the church house. It is even good for him to shake hands with everybody present. But if he does all this and does not preach "the word", he is not God's man. Many ministers spend their time in flattering their flock while they ought to be "reproving" and "rebuking" as Paul told Timothy in the verses above. Most of the blame for people "having itching ears" and "turning unto fables" can be laid at the feet of some ministers.

#### TOPIC 5. IT SELDOM GAINS RESPECT.

"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue," Proverbs 28:23.

This is an outstanding truth. Some of you may have experienced it. The true friend is the one who will tell you the truth, even if it means a rebuke, rather than to fill your ears with flattery. Flattery is pleasing to us at first, but afterwards it may lead to great sorrow. And in the end we will appreciate the person who tells us the truth more than the one who flatters us and thereby deceives. We do not, and cannot, respect the person who deals only in flattery. If you want to gain the respect of somebody, you must not be overly given to flattering remarks.

In Acts 12:21-22, we have the account of how Herod was flattered. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and, made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a god, and not of man." The following verse tells us that the angel of God immediately smote him because he gave not God the glory. The people here flattered Herod by referring to him as a god. It brought immediate judgment of God. It would have been better for the people to have looked upon Herod as what he was instead of trying to elevate him to the level of Jehovah. Were they true friends of Herod? They meant to be, but actually they were not because with their flattering lips they invited God's judgment upon him.

To gain the respect of our neighbor we should be honest, frank and sincere in our dealings with him. We should avoid a life filled with nothing but flattery and deceit. We may not have as many friends as we otherwise would have, but the ones we will have will be true friends.

#### TOPIC 6. A SYMBOL OF THE END OF THE AGE.

A great era of flattery will finally culminate in the Anti-Christ being enthroned. Let us read II Thessalonians 2:8-10, "And then shall that wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

We see a marked tendency in this age of people putting their trust and hope in men. We see it in politics when people put their hope in some man for better economic conditions. We see it all through Europe where many countries worship the head of their government as a virtual god. The masses of the world today are worshipping some man. The writer thinks this tendency will continue and that it will increase. World conditions will finally become such that there will be a time of great trouble, such as the world has never known. Along about this time a man will arise and set himself up as the saviour of the world. He will speak great and swelling words of promise. His kingdom will come in by flattery. He will be the world's superman, so-called. He will promise to lead us out of the maze of confusion into which the wisdom of men has led us. But he will not be able to fulfill his promises. The Lord shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth. Only when Jesus comes to take the reigns of government from men will we have peace and tranquility.

Between now and then flattery is going to play a prominent part in the affairs of the end-time. It will be one of the outstanding attributes of the Man of Sin, or the Anti-Christ. He will sway the masses with it. And for a brief time he will have people bowing down and worshipping him as very god. He will come with "all power and signs and lying wonders." Satanic power will be manifested by him, but his end is certain and just.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The thing that should concern us now is the "falling away" spoken of here. I believe we are now in that falling-away period. If so, we should look for the appearing of the Anti-Christ. God's people shall be raptured before Jesus comes to destroy the Anti-Christ. Are we ready to be caught up to be with Him?

#### TOPIC 7. SAINTS SHOULDN'T PRACTICE IT.

"For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away," Job 32:22.

Christians should be especially careful not to indulge in flattering words. I suppose most of us consider a little flattery harmless. But it can assume gigantic proportions and get out of hand very easily. If flattery is going to play a prominent part in the affairs of the end of the Gentile age upon earth, then we as Christians should

not be found engaging in it. To do so is only to help further confuse the problems and perplexities of this generation.

The words spoken to Israel a long time ago could be aptly applied to us. They are found in Joshua 24:14 as follows, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." We have too many gods today—gods that cannot save or even comfort. Paul ends his Epistle to the Ephesians with these words, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

In his instructions to Titus Paul said, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity sincerity," Titus 2:7.

Peter said "As babes, desire the sincere milk of the word." Many other New Testament writers urge upon us the thought of sincerity of purpose in our Christian efforts. Without this sincerity, the Lord cannot, and will not, bless.

### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Do you think we spend too much time in flattering talk?
2. Do you think flattering words accomplish anything?
3. Do you think it is being untruthful when you flatter somebody by remarking upon their good looks when you don't mean it?
4. Is it right for people to invite and expect flattery?
5. Had you ever thought about this present age being the most vain age the world has ever known?
6. If this is the most vain age of all, do you think it is good or bad?
7. Are all people vain?
8. Do you think we spend too much time and money on the fashions, styles and fads of this age?
9. Have you ever read the rules of self-examination in the first five verses of Matthew 7?
10. Do we judge a tree by its fruit or by its leaves?
11. Is a Christian known by his fruits rather than by his profession?
12. What responsibility is attached to knowing the Lord's will?
13. What is said in Jeremiah 6:16?
14. Do you think our modern conveniences have helped the masses to a greater or better knowledge of God?
15. Do you think people will be as much concerned about their physical appearance when they meet God as they are now?
16. Do you think a social gospel is as potent as the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?
17. Ministers called of God are admonished to "preach the Word". Do you think they should preach ALL the Word, or just pick out the passages that soothe the hearts of people?
18. What lesson should we learn from the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican?
19. Do you think the Lord is pleased by people being proud, arrogant and vain?
20. Do you find, in the Bible, any evidence of Christ having been vain while on earth?

### PROGRAM 1

1. OPENING HYMN: "LIVING FOR JESUS".
2. LEADER READS, "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9:13-14.
3. RESPONSIVE READING BY THE WHOLE GROUP, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," Hebrews 12:28.
4. ROLL CALL. Members answering with a verse of Scripture, the first letter of which is the same as the first letter in their given names.
5. OFFERTORY.
6. SPECIAL SONG, "If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today."
7. LEADER READS, "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil," Proverbs 1:33.
8. ONE MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER.

### THEME—I PURPOSE TO SERVE.

Assign parts ahead of time and each one having a part should be given time to prepare a good paper on each of the following topics:

1. I PURPOSE TO SERVE FAITHFULLY. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," I Corinthians 4:2.
2. I PURPOSE TO SERVE DAILY. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," I Corinthians 15:28.
3. I PURPOSE TO SERVE DESPITE HINDRANCES. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh," II Corinthians 4:8-11.
4. I PURPOSE TO SERVE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor," John 12:25-26.

SENTENCE PRAYER AND BENEEDICTION.

## WE SHOULD BE BRIDGE BUILDERS

An old man going down a lone highway  
 Came at evening, cold and gray,  
 To a chasm vast and deep and wide.  
 The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
 The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
 But he turned when safe on the other side,  
 And built a bridge to span the tide.  
 "Old man", said a fellow pilgrim near,  
 "You are wasting your strength with building here,  
 Your journey will end with the ending day;  
 You never again will pass this way;  
 You've crossed the chasm deep and wide,  
 Why build you this bridge at eventide?"  
 The builder lifted his old gray head,  
 "Good friend, in the path I've come," he said,  
 "There followeth after me today  
 A youth whose feet must pass this way;  
 This chasm that has been naught to me,  
 To that fair youth may a pitfall be;  
 He, too, must cross in the twilight dim—  
 Good friend, I'm building this bridge for him."

—Author Unknown.

verse  
 proud

## STUDY 4

## The Virtue of Self-Denial

Scripture Reading: "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left," Genesis 13:9. (The one who has the introduction should fully relate the story of Abram and Lot.)

INTRODUCTION: The definition of self-denial is "Forbearance from gratifying one's own desires."

Much is said in the Bible about Christians practicing self-denial. The person who lives only to gratify his or her own desires lives a self-centered life that cannot be a blessing to others, and it cannot be of much benefit to God. A person cannot be a true Christian without practicing, to some degree at least, the virtue of self-denial.

## TOPIC 1. CHRIST SET THE EXAMPLE.

"Again, the devil taketh him into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship," Matthew 4:8-9. But Jesus did not allow the devil to swerve Him from His true purpose in coming into the world. Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Jesus set the example by denying Himself the material comforts of life during His ministry on earth. Matthew 8:20, "And Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Jesus could have had the best mansion of earth in which to dwell had He so desired. But He chose to walk and live among the poorest of the earth.

Jesus gave up the comforts of heaven to sleep on the ground of this earth, all that we might be saved from eternal ruin and loss. John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Surely, no person can match the self-denial of the Lord Jesus Christ in laying aside the royal garments of glory and coming to earth to redeem fallen humanity.

Jesus did not seek to please Himself. Acts 15:3, "For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." His only thought was for the welfare of others. This is why he was willing to bear all the reproach and all the shame that fell upon Him.

He denied Himself a great reputation. Philippians 2:6-8, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It would not have been robbery on his part had He put Himself on an equal basis with God, because He is equal with God. But He chose to take upon Himself the nature of man that He might understand the problems of men.

## TOPIC 2. NECESSARY IN FOLLOWING CHRIST.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple," Luke 14:27. The language of this verse is such that we cannot fail to understand the problems of men.

stand that it is part of a Christian's lot to bear a cross and exercise self-denial. In verse 33 of the same chapter even stronger language is used. Here it is, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." This simply means that all that we have ought to be put to use in God's work. We should deny ourselves the proceeds from such as we have and find joy and happiness in knowing that it is being used of the Lord. We should not deny ourselves the necessities of life, but rather glorify God even in those things. That is what Paul meant in I Corinthians 10:31 when he said, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." Many times we can glorify God better by buying our family the necessary things of life.

Self-denial is necessary if the Saints are to fight the good fight of faith. II Timothy 24, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." If we are to properly equip ourselves as soldiers of the Lord we must not only put on the armor of God, but we must also put off the "affairs of this life." That is, we must subjugate the things of this life to the things of God. A soldier, when he goes into the Army of the United States, leaves behind him his civilian relationship. And a child of God must leave behind the things that would hinder one from being a good soldier for Christ.

Self-denial is necessary to the triumph of the Saints. I Corinthians 9:25-27, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In these verses Paul says, among other things, that a participant in physical contests must be temperate to win the crown, and that such practices self-denial is an incorruptible one.

Surely, our running the Christian race is much more important than running a literal race. And if we are to triumph, we must run according to the rules and the rules include temperance and self denial.

### TOPIC 3. A TEST OF DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

How much do we love Christ? Does our love measure up to the standard which God has set? Let us see. Matthew 10:37-38, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Does our love meet that high standard? This does not mean that we should not love our father or mother, son or daughter, but it does mean that we should not love our kindred more than we love God. That would be having other gods before Him. God teaches us to love our parents, etc., but He also teaches that we should love Him first and with a love above earthly love.

In our giving to the Lord and His cause we actually haven't given anything until we give something out of self-denial. To give God the surplus is not the kind of giving that produces blessings. What did Jesus say of the mite which the poor widow gave? Mark 12:43-44, "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Self-denial should be indulged in daily, and not merely at certain times of the

week. Luke 9:23-24, "And he said unto them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." We ought to subjugate our life to the extent that it will be lost to the world but useful in the service of God.

### TOPIC 4. DANGER OF NEGLECTING IT.

"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient (of my allowance) for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Proverbs 30:8-9. We have pointed out here the danger of neglecting to give God the portion that belongs to Him. If we do not deny ourselves to further God's cause, and we become prosperous, we are likely to take all the credit to ourselves and say, "Who is the Lord?" and deny Him.

Many people have been what the world calls successful at making a living, but many of them have been utter failures at making a life. If we deny the Lord in this life, He will deny us one day. Matthew 10:33, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." This Scripture is usually applied to the unsaved, but there are multitudes of Christians whom the Lord will also deny because they have denied Him. They will be denied rewards, they will be denied a place of prominence in God's Government. Every saved person will still be saved, but they will suffer the loss of many rewards and many commendations because they have neglected the virtue of self-denial.

In Luke 12:15, there is a woeful warning. "And he said unto them, take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." And then follows a parable in which a man said, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much stow all my fruits for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But that man didn't reckon with God, for that night his soul was required of him. There is danger in neglecting self-denial.

### TOPIC 5. SHOULD ALSO BE EXERCISED.

1. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. Romans 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Titus 2:12, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
2. In controlling the appetite. Proverbs 23:2, "And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite."
3. Not seeking our own profit. 1 Corinthians 10:24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Philippians 2:4, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
4. Even in lawful things. I Corinthians 10:23, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."
5. In putting off the old man. Ephesians 4:22, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Colossians 3:9, "Lie not one to another, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

6. In assisting others. Luke 3:11, "He answereth and saith unto them, he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

7. In preferring Christ to all others. Matthew 8:21, "And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."

8. In forsaking all. Luke 14:33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

### TOPIC 6. HAPPY RESULT OF IT.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," Peter 1:10-11.

To practice self-denial is only the negative side of our profession. The positive side is manifested by filling our lives with the virtues mentioned by Peter in verses 5-7 of this same chapter. The result of all this is a happy Christian. You can't drive darkness out of a room with a club, you must bring in the opposite of darkness, which is light. The heart that empties itself of sinful things must bring in the opposite of those things if there is to be any fruit produced. Only a little happiness is found in self-denial—The joy is found in filling our lives with the opposite of that which is displeasing to God.

There will be rich rewards in heaven for those who do this. II John 8, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." Not only should we desire a reward, but we should desire a FULL reward. We should desire every reward that God has in store for those who do His will.

There is a reward for confidence. Hebrews 10:35, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

There is a reward that goes with bearing the reproach associated with serving the Lord. Moses considered it. Hebrews 11:26, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

There is a reward for hearty service. Colossians 3:23-24, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

There is a reward for the least service we can render. Matthew 10:32, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

There is a reward for loving our enemies. Luke 6:35, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Rewards are not always spoken of, or promised, in merely a general sense. There will be individual rewards for individual Christians. I Corinthians 3:8, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."

There is a reward for willingness to preach the Gospel. I Corinthians 9:17, "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

### TOPIC 7. EXAMPLES.

There are many Bible examples of godly people who practiced self-denial. The person who has this part should see how many she can find. Here are a few: Daniel, The Apostles, Poor Widow, Barnabas, Paul, etc. Find Scriptures that tell us about these and as many more as you can find.

### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Did the early Christians practice self-denial?
2. Name some of the dangers in not denying oneself the ungodly things of this life.
3. What does Romans 6:6 mean?
4. Do you think most of us today deny ourselves as we should, that the Lord's Cause might prosper?
5. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ deny Himself even the comforts of life while on earth?
6. Are great deeds done for Christ the only ones accepted by Him?
7. What sort of works will abide and what sort will be burned up? I Corinthians 3.
8. Is it easy to be a true disciple of Jesus?
9. What is meant by "serving mammon"?
10. How deep-rooted in our nature is the sin of covetousness?
11. What is said in Titus 1:16?
12. Is love of the world compatible with love to our Lord?
13. What consolation do we have in trouble and sorrow?
14. Was the Comforter a temporary gift?
15. Why cannot the world receive the Comforter?
16. What is a good standard by which to judge our love for God?
17. Do you think all God's people will be in the Judgment of Christian Rewards?
18. Upon what basis will they be judged?
19. Do you think there is any relationship between our sins and our sufferings?
20. Is self-denial a virtue?

## STUDY 5

## The Value of Humility

Scripture Reading: "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," Luke 18:13-14.

INTRODUCTION—One of the most distressing sights in all the world is to see proud and arrogant people professing to be the followers of God. Much harm is done to the cause of Christianity by people who exhibit such a spirit. It is beyond explanation why some people, who profess to love the Lord, can boast of themselves and glory in their accomplishments, when the Bible teaches that of all people everywhere, the Christian is first and foremost to be an humble person.

Perhaps the church has lost influence in this age because of the haughty and proud spirit manifested by a number of so-called Christians. The world is not impressed by our words when our attitudes are such as to void our profession. Lord, deliver us from the loud, blatant, belligerent type of Christianity.

## TOPIC 1. HUMBLE BECAUSE WE REMEMBER.

"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore, I command thee this thing today," Deuteronomy 15:15.

And we ought to remember how we were in bondage to sin and Satan, and how we were delivered. The Lord redeemed us, not because of our goodness and merits, but rather because of His goodness and mercy—and we ought to remember it. We ought to remember it to the degree of being humbly thankful each hour of the day. We are yet sinners, but we are sinners saved by grace. We fail to realize we are yet sinners when we show a proud and haughty spirit in our Christian lives.

Paul tells us that charity (love) is not "puffed up", and that it is long-suffering and kind. This is true Christian love. We ought to guard against a false attitude of Christian love—one that does not call for humility and meekness.

Solomon, one of the wisest of men, was familiar with the value of humility. He said in Proverbs 16:19, "Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." A close study of this verse reveals to us the reason why there are so many proud spirits among mortal men. It is because they want to "divide the spoil with the proud." They seek after the honors of the world, neglecting the greatest honor of all, that of being highly favored of, and used by, the Lord.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8. Many of us are not so capacitated as to be able to serve God in a great way, as we think. But if we are walking humbly with God, then we are serving Him in a great way, even though our talents are both few and small. To remember how God saved us, notwithstanding the fact we were guilty sinners, is enough to cause all of us to serve Him with humility.

## TOPIC 2. HUMILITY NECESSARY TO GUIDANCE.

God cannot guide the person who is proud and arrogant. Only those who are humble respond to His tender guidance and leadership. Psalms 25:9, "The meek will be guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

We are all familiar with how difficult it is to teach a child, who has a proud and unruly spirit. It is difficult to lead them into the right way of life. It is difficult to teach them how to avoid the adverse things of life. Just so, it is difficult, if not altogether improbable, for God to lead and guide His children who are not willing to be humble and meek.

A good admonition is found in James 1:19 where it is said, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." We cannot learn much in the schoolroom of God unless we are willing to sit humbly down and be taught through the leadership and guidance of the Master Teacher. There are many lessons for us on the great blackboard of time, but we shall never learn them as long as we think we know as much as the teacher.

What is said in Luke 10:21? "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." God reveals many things to those who are willing to admit that they are still in the "cradle roll", but He cannot reveal them to those who are not willing to humbly seek His guidance.

It is much better for us to remain humbly silent and let God speak to us, than it is to be forever boasting of our own accomplishments. Ecclesiastes 5:2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

By being led of the Lord in an humble way, our joys increase many times. Isaiah 29:19, "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."

Remember Romans 12:3, which reads, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

It is well to remember also that Paul told the Colossians (3:12), "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind . . ."

## TOPIC 3. HUMILITY: THE DRESS OF A CHRISTIAN.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time," I Peter 5:5-6.

Of all the ornaments to be put on after our salvation, humility is probably the most important. After being saved we should, of course, follow the Lord in baptism. And in that act we don the Christian uniform. But there are ornaments to pin on that uniform, so to speak. And the greatest of these is probably humility. "To be clothed with humility" means to be enveloped about with it. To have it as a shield, and as a safeguard.

Humility is an attribute of God. Therefore, it pleases God to see this quality in us. It is not the natural tendency of people to be humble. It is a quality that must come after one's salvation through which the Spirit of God is manifested. The soldiers of a country wear the particular and specified uniform of that country. As citizens

of heaven we should adorn ourselves with humility, because it is a most important part of the uniform of the redeemed.

A soldier of the United States is recognized by the uniform he wears. A child of God should be easily recognized by others because of his meek and quiet spirit.

*"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,"* II Peter 3:4.

"Of great price" means this virtue is valuable in God's estimation. By this uniform we can attract the interest of those who are aliens to God's grace. Did you ever see a foreign soldier, notice his uniform, and wonder what it was like in his country? If so, you were attracted first by his uniform, and then your thoughts strayed to the conditions in his country. Just so, there are those who gaze upon us daily and wonder what it is like to be a Christian. By putting on the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" we give them some inkling of what heaven is like.

When we put on our clothing in the morning, we should be just as careful to clothe our lives with humility. It is just as necessary that we clothe the inner man as it is to clothe the body. It is just as important, in fact, more so, to keep the inner man clean as it is to keep the physical body clean.

Let us be careful to adorn ourselves with all the ornaments that go with the uniform of Christ, and more especially with the ornament of humility which is, in the sight of God, of great price.

#### TOPIC 4. HUMILITY LEADS TO WISDOM.

The person who talks all the time never grows much in knowledge. He keeps everything going out and nothing coming in. Knowledge and wisdom are two separate and distinct things, yet they are closely related. You can have knowledge without wisdom, but you can't have much wisdom without knowledge, because wisdom is the right application of knowledge.

*"If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may get wise,"* I Corinthians 3:18. One of the very first things a prospective student must realize is that he doesn't know very much. He must realize his need of a teacher. In this attitude he is apt to gain knowledge. But when a person has knowledge he is not yet wise unless he knows how to apply that knowledge in order to obtain the best results.

There are a goodly number of Christians today who have sufficient knowledge, but they lack the wisdom to properly apply that knowledge to the glory of God. Some are not wise in that they are tactless. Some are not wise because their methods are wrong. Some are not wise because they do not humbly apply their knowledge. Anytime you leave humility out of the Lord's work, no matter what phase of work it is, you can just expect it to be sooner or later, a failure. Is it not so? Do you know of actual events that illustrate the truth? Solomon said, Proverbs 12:15, *"He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."* When we fail to counsel with God in lowly humility we are wasting our time.

*"The foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men."* And the following verses tell us that *"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."* Worldly wisdom as contrasted with the wisdom of God is utter foolishness. God's wisdom far transcends man's wisdom. True wisdom is obtained only of God. *"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . ."*

The wisdom we receive by humbly waiting upon God will never lead us in the wrong direction. Finally, remember I Corinthians 10:12: *"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*

#### TOPIC 5. HUMILITY AND EXALTATION.

The Scriptures teach that humility must come before exaltation. Solomon said in Proverbs 15:33, *"Before honour is humility"*. The Christian who is not humble in this life can expect few rewards in glory. Those who exalt themselves in this life will not be elevated in eternity. It is as Jesus said of those who did things to be seen of men. He said, *"Verily, they have their reward."* In other words, if they were doing things just to be seen of men, then to be seen of men was the only reward they would have.

*"When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, friend, go up higher,"* Luke 14:10. It is better to wait for the Lord to exalt us than to take the best seat ourselves and glory in our own importance.

We wouldn't have so much strife in our churches today if Christians would abide by the teachings of the Scriptures in this regard. Paul lays down a rule in Ephesians 5:21 that should govern us all, *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* There is too much self-exaltation and too little regard for others in our churches today.

There are some who think they should be privileged to show off their talent without regard for others. Some church members get angry if they can't sing a special when they desire. Some get angry because they can't be in the "limelight" in some other way. All this is exalting oneself. It is well to remember *"pride goeth before destruction"*.

Consider what Solomon said in Proverbs 27:2, *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."* If we have talent, or anything that can be used of God, God knows it already and the people will find it out soon enough without "showing off" by exalting oneself.

In this respect it is well for us to be as children. Matthew 18:2, *"Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

Matthew 23:12 also gives us a warning in the words of our Lord Himself, *"And Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."*

This sin was prominent in Old Testament days and God punished those guilty of it. We have one example in Obadiah 4, *"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."* And God kept His word to bring down those who set their nests among the stars. When we pass from the shores of time into heaven, then will the Lord exalt us according to His will. It is better to wait upon Him than to exalt ourselves.

#### TOPIC 6. HUMILITY EXEMPLIFIED.

1. How was it exemplified by Abraham? Genesis 18:27.
2. How was it exemplified by Solomon in I Kings 3:7?
3. How was it exemplified by Job in 33:6?

4. How was it exemplified by David in Psalms 131:1?
5. How was it exemplified by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:14?
6. How was it exemplified by the woman in Matthew 15:27?
7. How was it exemplified by the Centurian in Luke 7:6.
8. How was it exemplified by Gideon in Judges 6:15?
9. How was it exemplified by Elizabeth in Luke 1:43?

The one who has this part should be prepared to give a brief story from the life of each of the above characters with particular emphasis upon the exemplification of humility.

*Mrs. Couch*

### TOPIC 7. THE MEEKEST OF THE MEEK.

Christ has set the example in humility and meekness. We are never asked to follow where He, Himself, has not gone. There is much in the Old Testament prophesies concerning the meekness and humility of the Christ who was to come. Lack of space forbids mentioning all the Scriptures. The best known one, perhaps, is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. We quote only part of it here:

*"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*

*"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . ."*

This language is such that no comment is needed. None of us could add anything to this description of how the Lord Jesus meekly bowed His head and went to Calvary for us. There are many events in His earthly ministry that point to His humility and meekness:

When He rode into Jerusalem on a mule He did so that His entry might not be associated with the pomp and glamour usually accorded a conquering king.

In Matthew 9, we have the account of how He ate with Publicans and sinners.

In the 4th chapter of John, we have the account of how He tarried at the well to speak to an outcast woman.

In Luke 22, He said, *"I am among you as one that serveth."*

In John 13:5, we have the account of how He washed the disciples feet in a gesture of humility.

Paul said, in Philippians 2:7, that Christ *"Made himself of no reputation."*

Peter says, I Peter 2:23, *"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."*

There are numerous other Scriptures that tell us about the lowliness and humility of our blessed Lord. Such a character had never before, and will never again, cross the walks of men until, in God's own good time, Christ once more comes back to gather His people home. While we are awaiting our coming Lord, let us seek to manifest the same meekness, the same humility, the same spirit of service to all mankind.

### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. What did Jesus say in Matthew 11:29?
2. For what reason did Paul say the messenger of Satan was given him? Corinthians 12:7.
3. To whom did Paul give credit for his labors in I Corinthians 15:10?

4. Did Paul say that he was the greatest of all saints? Ephesians 3:8.
5. Did Paul say he was but a small sinner in I Timothy 1:15?
6. Why is it that people just naturally like to exalt themselves?
7. Do you think we need more humility in our associated work?
8. What is said in Isaiah 50:5-7?
9. Is it Christ who is spoken of there?
10. What is said in Luke 23:34?
11. Is what He said there an example of humility?
12. Who marvelled at the humility of Jesus in Matthew 27:14?
13. What is said of the meek in Matthew 5:5?
14. Read I Thessalonians 4:11.
15. What is one of the qualifications of the Lord mentioned in II Timothy 2:24-25?
16. Read Titus 3:2.
17. Do you think pride and arrogance a good thing in the life of a Christian?
18. Should we endeavor to keep our temper under control at all times?
19. Are we worthy of all the mercies God bestows upon us?
20. What is one way in which everybody can show their gratitude for God's mercies?



## STUDY 6

## A Time of Falling Away

Scripture Reading: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

INTRODUCTION—These verses deal with the coming of the Man of Sin, or the Anti-Christ. And we are told in the first verses of the chapter that the main subject under consideration is the second coming of our Lord. But before the Lord comes there is to come a "falling away" in which there will be but little of the spirit of real Christianity seen and felt in the affairs of this life. While students of this subject differ as to the exact details, we believe it safe to say that the order of events will be as follows: First, the "falling away"—an uncertain period of time in which there will be gradual departure from the truth, and from the principles of righteousness on the part of the masses. Second, the coming of the Man of Sin. He will arise some time during this period, probably towards the end of it, and actually be enthroned and people will fall down and worship him. Third, the Lord shall come and smite this man of sin. This event is referred to as the "day of Christ" in verse 2.

This "falling away" will not only be by the masses of the world, but it also has its application to the true people of God becoming cold and indifferent. I think we are living now in the beginning of this "falling away" time. I do not mean to be a date-setter. No person knows the exact time when the Lord shall come, or when some of the prophecies concerning His coming are to be fulfilled. But we do have certain signs along the way which tell us that this is the age when many of these things are to be fulfilled. I think we are seeing the fulfillment of many of them today.

## TOPIC 1. PEOPLE SHALL LOVE THEMSELVES.

In II Timothy 3, the Apostle Paul speaks of many things that shall come to pass in "the last days". This Scripture should be studied in order to develop each topic of today's lesson.

Among the signs that Paul mentions here is that of men being "lovers of their own selves." This is one of the things that shall characterize the last days. We have many people today who think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. We are admonished against this sin. See Romans 12:3.

To have a high opinion of oneself is to dethrone God in his heart. We should be careful to avoid letting the "ego" in us take control of our lives. Paul could have said people would be egotistical, for that is exactly what loving oneself is. And that prophecy is being exactly fulfilled today.

We see it in the social realm. Much of what the world calls society is built upon this very principle. People like to be in the "limelight". And a lot of the things they do are done, not for the glory of something or somebody else, but for their own vain glory. I John 2:15 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." We are not to love the world system that tends to lead us away from the things of God.

We see it in the political world. Men have set themselves up as the saviour of mankind in an economic sense. Men think they have the wisdom and the power to settle all the problems that perplex mankind. But this is not true. Men will find out one day that it isn't true. The student of the Bible already knows it isn't true. There is a tendency in our day for people to worship men, especially world statesmen and the heads of government. Thus we see, even now, the tendency which will end only in people enthroning and worshipping the Man of Sin. In one sense, it doesn't seem reasonable how people will actually worship the Man of Sin. But is it unreasonable? We see great hordes of people today worshipping Stalin as a god. People worshipped Hitler as a god. And people will one day universally worship the Man of Sin.

We see it in some churches. There are some church members who have to be "IT" all the time, or else they will not co-operate. They are lovers of themselves. They have no regard for others. With such the Lord is certainly not pleased. Read Philippians 2:3.

## TOPIC 2. COVETOUSNESS WIDESPREAD.

Another one of the signs given by Paul in II Timothy 3 is that of covetousness. This is another sin that is prevalent today and shows how people are falling away from established and time-seasoned principles.

It has its application in an economic sense. Most of us today want what our neighbors have, whether we can afford it or not. That is covetousness. Many times people (are not all of us guilty?) buy beyond their means because we are bitten by the bug of covetousness. It should not be so. It is all right to eagerly desire things that are good, but not just because we want to "keep up with the Jones."

This fault in our lives has led to a serious breakdown in our economic system. This is one reason why we have inflation. This is the reason why we are facing serious trouble as a government, both in our states and nationally. When God said, early in the history of the human race, "Thou shalt not covet", He was not only giving a law that would, if observed, allow people to live together in peace and harmony, but He was also giving a law that the observance of which would be a support of economic processes and sound government.

Happiness is found in being content with what one has, not in coveting what the other person has. This was Paul's instructions to Timothy, I Timothy 6:7-8, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

This is not to say that we should not have pride, resourcefulness, etc. But it is to say that we should subordinate all other things to the things of God. Therein is found true happiness. Mose people's visions do not extend far enough—these extend only to the end of this life. We provide for our existence along life's way, but what about our eternal existence? We should be storing up something for that.

Matthew 6:19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

## TOPIC 3. FALSE ACCUSERS ACTIVE.

Another sign of the "falling away" is the activity of false accusers. Notice in

the marginal reading of your Bible that this word is "makebates", meaning "those who excite contentions and strife."

We have a multitude of them today in all phases of life. The most significant thing is the marked increase of such in religious circles. It is true in many of our local churches. People have become so self-centered that they are always ready to accuse the other person, but they cannot see their own faults. True people of God who are discharging their responsibility as they should will have little time left in which to concentrate on the faults of others. A good rule for people, who are always seeing the mistakes of others, is to sit on the front seat in church service—then they won't be able to see what others are doing. It is usually the ones who sit in back, the ones who serve God "spasmodically", the ones who never do anything themselves, that are always ready to stir up contention and strife.

All such are going to answer to God for their conduct. II Timothy 2:23, "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient (forbearing)." Philippians 2:3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

It has its application in the home. The number of broken homes in America must be a very disgusting thing in the eyes of God. This sad state of affairs has been brought about because in this "falling away" period the number of people "who excite contentions and strife" has multiplied to an astonishing degree. The masses today make little effort to keep their passions under control. They want their own sinful way without regard to the other fellow or to God.

It is well to remember what James said about an unruly member of our body. James 3:5-6, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course (tumult) of nature: and it is set on fire of hell." Much of the strife and confusion that blights the lives of people, especially in our churches, is because some people cannot govern their tongue.

Many people gender strifes deliberately, and they should be marked and shunned. Others do it because they are devoid of thoughtfulness and Christian courtesy. This writer believes that a school for church members in courses of thoughtfulness and Christian courtesy would be a good thing.

#### TOPIC 4. LOVERS OF PLEASURE.

The Apostle also said in our lesson that people would "be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." How mightily this Scripture is being fulfilled. This is probably the most prominent of the "falling away" signs. The human race seems to be on a Roman Holiday, carefree, pleasure-bent, throwing all restraint to the four winds.

Certain pleasures are ordained of God and pleasing to Him. But the masses are not satisfied with this. They have lifted the ban on worldly pleasure and sin and gone headlong into the very depths of infamy and shame. All such is expected of a worldly generation, but when Christians love the pleasures of this world more than they love God, is it not concrete evidence of the "falling away"?

Titus 3:3, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man ap-

peared . . ." In this verse we are told how sinners might revel in sin before the mercy of God is shed abroad in their hearts. But after we realize the kindness of God and His love appears to us, how can we continue in sin? In verse 8 of the same chapter, we are admonished to "maintain good works" if we have believed in God.

Notice the word "deceived" in Titus 3:3. Many of the pleasures of this life are deceiving. They appear to be all right on the surface, because Satan plans it that way, but once we become a victim, the consequences are tragic.

Luke 8:14 tells us that a pleasure loving Christian is a Christian that cannot produce fruit, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." The Christian who is a lover of worldly pleasure is of no benefit to God or His church when it comes to influencing others.

A fearful doom is pronounced upon the unsaved who live in pleasure. James 5:5, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." And the Judgment of Christian Rewards awaits the pleasure-loving Christian. What shall our answer be?

In this "time of falling away" we should be true to the Captain of our salvation. We should spurn the overtures of the world and the pleasures of this life, that we might please the One who redeemed us by His grace. Moses realized that the pleasures of Egypt were but for a season, and he chose to bear the reproach of Christ, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

We might give our every faculty to the god's of pleasure in this life, but what does it profit us when we come to cross over to the other side? The god's of the world cannot comfort us in that solemn hour. They cannot comfort us in eternity. Our sinful associates cannot bear us across the great chasm that separates time from eternity. It is better to live for God and righteousness.

#### TOPIC 5. A FORM OF GODLINESS.

Another sign of the "falling away" is a form of religion in which Christ is not given the proper place. This is a religion "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The world lacks not for religion today. There is much of it and many kinds. But most of it is a mere "form", a "hull"—it does not contain the kernel. A peanut shell which does not contain the peanut is about as valuable as a "form" of religion that does not contain Christ. I think the Bible predicts a great world system of religion that shall be manifested in the latter days, a Christless religion, a religion that is religious in name only. Perhaps it will be tied in with the State, or government. But it will be a religion that will be overthrown by God and Christ when Christ comes for His own. The trend is already towards such a pseudo-religious State. This is one of the main reasons why I believe we are in almost any direction you look.

The world lacks not for church houses—you can see them in almost any direction you look. But in how many of them is Christ exalted and preached as the way of life? In how many of them do you find pronouncements against sin, and a warning of the judgment to come? The true New Testament Church faces a formidable foe; not a foe that comes in the name of atheism and infidelity, but rather one that comes in the name of religion seeking to deceive.

The vain nature of the human race is fertile ground for the ritualism and ceremonialism of the modern type of worship today. The writer has heard the remark

"What a beautiful service" after some kind of a religious meeting. It may have been beautiful in one sense, but not beautiful in the eyes of God because Christ was not mentioned. There is too much stress placed on beauty in a physical sense, and not enough emphasis on what is beautiful—spiritually speaking.

This "form of godliness" rarely, if ever, preaches obedience to the laws of God, not even obedience to the fundamentals of the faith. It is not a practical religion. It doesn't benefit either God or man, but merely consumes money, time, and sometimes talent that could be utilized in real service to God.

This "form of godliness" does not bring about the salvation of lost souls, because it doesn't preach, in the first place, that man is lost. It is a "mother Hubbard" sort of religion that covers everything and touches nothing.

Yes, it is a time of "falling away" when many false prophets are abroad in the land. The real Christian will seek to worship God in Spirit and in truth, and a blessing is pronounced upon all such who seek to worship Him.

### TOPIC 6. TRAITORS.

This study would not be complete without saying a word about another sign that Paul mentions in our Scripture. He said people will be "traitors". This is another sign of the "falling away".

There was a time when the word of most people was "as good as their bond". Not so anymore. There is a vast number of people today who keep their word. But speaking in a general sense, people have become traitors.

It is true in a political sense. Many men have sold their birthrights for the privilege of holding office, and then became traitors by yielding to unholy influences which foster corrupt government. The principles of Bible righteousness are seldom seen in politics. This is a far departure from that which existed in our father's day. It is all because we are in the "falling away".

It is true in a religious sense. There are many who depart from the faith. They do not think of themselves as being traitors, but anytime we depart from the principles of God's word we are traitors. Compromise is the word that is often used to describe such, but the Bible uses the word "traitors". To compromise on the word of God in any respect is to be a traitor to God. Many people who are good Missionary Baptists in their home community unite with another kind of Baptist church when they sometimes move into another community. Are they "traitors"?

If all our people did such do you suppose we would ever organize another church? It is true in an individual sense. Most people have lost their conception of what it means to promise something, to make a vow to do something. We take a vow when we unite with the church, a vow that we ought always to respect. Have we kept our word? It might do all of us good to read the church covenant to which we subscribed when we united with our church.

(Order a supply of the billfold size covenants from the Baptist Publication Committee and study it. \$1.00 per hundred.)

Do we seek to carry out those noble principles?  
 "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed," Ecclesiastes 5:4.

### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Discuss some of the other things mentioned by Paul in II Timothy 3:2-5 which are signs of the "falling away".

2. Do you think conditions in this respect are going to improve before the Lord comes?
3. What is said in Matthew 24:12?
4. What is said in Matthew 24:24?
5. Read Matthew 24:37-39.
6. What is said in Isaiah 47:8-9?
7. Who is able to keep us from falling? Jude 24.
8. What is a righteous man falling down with the wicked likened to in Proverbs 25:26?
9. Do you think the Anti-Christ is now living, even though he has not been revealed?
10. Will the Anti-Christ be a real person?
11. What is said of the generation before the flood in Genesis 6:5?
12. May we expect this same condition to exist before the second coming of Christ?
13. If the answer is yes, give at least two reasons why you think so.
14. How was Jacob an example of a careless Christian?
15. Do you think people worship idol gods today?
16. If so, what are some of those gods?
17. What is said in II Timothy 3:12-13?
18. What restraining power is now holding back the workings of the "mystery of iniquity" mentioned in II Thessalonians 2?
19. What is said in James 4:16?
20. Do you think we are in the "falling away" time mentioned in our lesson?

## Topical Bible Studies

## PROGRAM 2

## A Thanksgiving Service

1. OPENING HYMN, "Count Your Blessings".
2. LEADER READS Revelations 7:11-12, "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."
3. RESPONSIVE READING BY THE ENTIRE GROUP, II Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."
4. ROLL CALL. Members answering with a verse of Scripture containing the word "praise".
5. OFFERTORY.
6. GROUP SINGS THE DOXOLOGY, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."
7. LEADER READS II Corinthians 9:15, "But thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."
8. ONE MOMENT OF SILENT THANKFULNESS AND PRAYER.

**THEME—FROM THE TREASURE HOUSE OF MY MEMORY  
I BRING THANKS.**

Assign parts ahead of time, so that each part might be properly developed. Here the leader, or program chairman, should introduce the program by some remarks on the subject of memory. Such as—to have a hammer in the house is a simple matter, to know where it is when you want it is often a problem. The memory is not exactly automatic in its operations. It is one thing to know, and quite another thing to be able to recall that knowledge at the right moment. We remember best those things which strongly appeal to us. David said, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High," Psalms 77:10. So let us remember the many mercies of God. Our memory is a great treasure house from which we should bring thanks to God. Let each part begin with "From the treasure house of my memory, I bring thanks . . ."

*Mrs Black*  
**PART ONE**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for the manner of my salvation (by grace through faith). Find Scriptures to support this topic.

*Miss Hill*  
**PART TWO**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for the word of God. II Thessalonians 2:13.

*Mrs Wade*  
**PART THREE**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for Christian friends. Philippians 1:3.

**PART FOUR**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for all God's mercies. Ephesians 2:4.

*Mrs Mayhew*  
**PART FIVE**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for a heavenly home. John 14:2-3.

**PART SIX**

From the treasure house of my memory I bring thanks for prayer and God's promise to answer prayer. Find Scriptures to develop this part.

Have each member give the name of a Bible character beginning with the letters in the word THANKSGIVING. Begin with T and go all the way through to G. Example—T stands for Timothy, H stands for Ham, etc. As each member thinks of the name, she should rise, give the name, and remain until all the letters have been used.

BENEDICTION.

## WHAT THEN?

When the great busy plants of our cities  
 Shall have turned out their last finished work;  
 When our merchants have sold their last order,  
 And dismissed every last tired clerk;  
 When our banks have raked in their last dollar,  
 And have paid their last dividend;  
 When the Judge of earth wants a hearing,  
 And asks for a balance, WHAT THEN?

When the choir has sung its last anthem,  
 And the preacher has prayed his last prayer;  
 When the people have heard their last sermon,  
 And the sound has died out on the air;  
 When the Bible lies closed on the altar,  
 And the pews are all empty of men;  
 When each one stands facing his record,  
 And the great book is opened, WHAT THEN?

When the actors have played their last drama,  
 And the mimic has made his last fun;  
 And the movie has flashed its last picture,  
 And the billboard displayed its last run.  
 When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,  
 And gone out in the darkness again—  
 When the Trumpet of ages is sounded,  
 And we stand up before Him, WHAT THEN?

When the bugle's call sinks into silence,  
 And the long marching columns stand still;  
 When the captain repeats his last orders,  
 And they've captured the last fort and hill.  
 When the flag has been hauled from the masthead,  
 All the wounded of the field are checked in,  
 And a world that has rejected its Saviour  
 Is asked for a reason, WHAT THEN?

—Author Unknown.

## Study 7

## A Divine Pattern in Soul Winning

Scripture Reading: John 4:5-37.

INTRODUCTION—The Scripture reading is too long to quote here. Let each one study this entire chapter. This great event in the ministry of our Lord took place as Jesus left Judea and traveled through Samaria. The disciples were with Him. They came to the city of Sychar. Jacob's well was located there. It was a favorite watering place for the people of that vicinity. After Jesus and His Disciples had been traveling, they were naturally weary and hungry. The disciples went on into the city to buy food. But Jesus tarried at the well. Some of His followers urged Him to eat, but Jesus said "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

Because Jesus tarried at the well, and was more thoughtful about spiritual things than material food, He had occasion to meet with a woman who came to the well to draw water. He engaged her in conversation and led her to believe upon Him as the Saviour. Thus, we see the importance of using our opportunities, no matter what they are, to win souls to Christ. Had Jesus gone on into the city with His disciples to rest Himself and to eat, He would have missed the opportunity of talking to this woman about her soul.

Many times we, as Christians, put too many other things first in our lives when the supreme purpose should be the winning of souls. After they are won, our responsibility does not end . . . we are to indoctrinate them. After this woman was led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus taught her some of the things that follow conversion. For instance, He told her:

*"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

He ended this discourse with an appeal for all His followers to go forth in an effort to reach those lost in sin. We find this in verse 35 as follows:

*"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."*

The fields are still white unto harvest. It is for us, God's people, to go forth in a zealous and sincere effort to reap a harvest of souls for our Master. If we do not seek to win souls, we are failing in our primary duty as a child of God. Let us see something about the methods of Jesus in soul winning. There are five steps taken by Him in this story which we would do well to follow.

## PART 1. MAKING CONTACT.

*"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."*

At the time of day when others were thinking about temporal refreshments, Jesus remained at the well in order to contact this woman. It is generally agreed that the woman was a great sinner, perhaps an outcast in the eyes of the community. If so, she was not privileged to come to the well in the cool of the morning to get her water, as the other women of the community did. She was a social outcast. Yet, she was not beneath the saving grace of God, and Jesus did not think it beneath His dignity to speak to her about her sinful condition.

This should teach that the soul of a great sinner is worth just as much as any other soul. Perhaps we are too prone to confine our soul-winning efforts to those who are in the same circle as ourselves. But God doesn't reserve His saving grace for just a few selected ones; He would have all people everywhere to be saved, and after salvation to have their lives reclaimed.

Jesus went hungry to make this contact. We make contacts every day which we could use to speak to somebody about his soul. A person doesn't have to have a special calling to be a soul winner. We make contacts on our jobs, in our social relations, in our commercial dealings, and in many other ways, that provide an opportunity to speak to someone about their soul. Jesus spoke to those with whom He came in contact. He would have His children do the same today.

But even if we didn't have these opportunities presented to us, we could make an opportunity with just a little effort. When a barber walks down the street he notices the style of a person's haircut. When a shoemaker walks down the street he notices the kind of shoes a person wears. When a dentist looks at the other person he notices their teeth. As a Christian what do you see in others? We should see in others an immortal soul that needs the grace of God and the salvation of God. Soul-winning is the Christian's business; it is his vocation, his calling, his profession, and other opportunities to contact the lost, that our contact with others might be a blessing to both us and them.

## PART 2. EXCITING AN INTEREST.

After the contact is made much tact and diplomacy is needed in order for the contact to be a fruitful one. Abrupt methods seldom win people to Christ. To rush in and tell a person point blank that he is bound for hell is to alienate people. It is true that they are on the way to hell if they are without Christ, but the wrong method of approaching them will not remedy the situation. We should be truthful but also tactful. We must interest the other person in what we are presenting, much as a salesman must interest his customer. Notice the first thing that Jesus did after the contact had been made. He excited her interest:

*"Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*

Jesus holds out to her something that is interesting and valuable. We must excite the interest of the lost by impressing them with the fact that we have something they don't have, if we are to win them to God. This means, of course, that we must have a definite experience of grace ourselves before we can hope to interest others. We must not only have had a definite experience of grace ourselves, but we also must cultivate our interest for lost souls until we are anxious to talk to others about their lost condition.

In effect, Jesus told this woman that if only she knew what a great gift God had in store for her, she would be willing to ask God for it. She didn't know what a great thing salvation was. Neither does the lost person know today. One of the first things we must "get over" to the lost person is the fact that there is a vast difference in living without God and in living with God. Until they see the difference they are not likely to listen to our message.

Jesus spoke to this woman in such a way as to excite her interest. He told her about something she was missing, and gave her just enough information about it to

cause her to question Him further. In our efforts to win the lost, we should proceed gently and encourage the one to whom we are talking to do some of the talking himself. This places some of the responsibility upon him, and helps him to realize his lack of knowledge of spiritual things. Once he realizes his lack of knowledge, he is likely to become more interested in what we have to say.

Each of us as individuals might have different ideas and opinions as to winning others for Christ, and it is well that all of us are not capacitated alike. One person might win a soul where another person would fail. This is because of different traits and different natures. But there is a work for every child of God to do. There is some soul that you can probably reach where everybody else would fail. We do not mean to lay down a blanket rule for all to follow in soul-winning. But the things said in this lesson are generally true and this divine pattern in soul-winning is a good one to follow as to method—but coupled with this should be our natural, sincere talent. If we do this our work shall not go unrewarded.

## PART 3. APPEALING TO CONSCIENCE.

*"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither."*

Jesus knew that she didn't have a lawful husband. When she admitted this, Jesus told her that He knew all about her having had five husbands. When she realized the extent of His knowledge concerning her, she was conscience-stricken. She confessed that she was a sinner.

A profession of faith that does not come from a sense of guilt is worthless. Sinners must be made to realize that they have sinned against God. Right here we should not be side-tracked in our efforts to win souls. Too many times people bring up the sins of others, even the sins of church members, and point to them and say that they are as good as anybody else. This is beside the point. A sinner must be convinced that he has sinned against God. His sins against his fellow-man are beside the point when it comes to the matter of his own soul's salvation.

If all of us could see ourselves, and see the magnitude of our sins, before God we would waste little time in talking about the sins of others—we would have enough to do trying to repent of ours.

It is sin against God of which we should repent. A lost person should be made to realize that he will not have to answer for the other person, but that he will have to answer for himself. A realization of sin against God is necessary before one can be saved, and any profession that does not come from a repentant heart is vain and worthless.

When a person is convinced of his sinfulness, then is the time to acquaint that person with the mercy and mission of Jesus—that He came not to condemn, but to save. God hates sin. Jesus hates sin. But both of them love the soul of the sinner. And the Holy Trinity has gone to great lengths to convince us of this fact. And when a person realizes his guilt, and cries out in repentance to God—then is the time to speak of the mercy and love of God for the lost. It is then that we should acquaint the sinner with the words of Jesus:

*"For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

It is interesting to note that there is a difference in the language Jesus used when He talked with the woman at the well and in that which He used when dealing with Nicodemus. Nicodemus thought he was righteous, and Jesus spoke plainly to him. But with the woman He urged upon her the thought that He was not there

to condemn but to save. Nothing brings a response from God like repentance in our hearts. When we realize our guilt and cry out to God, He always answers. But a self-righteous person is likely to be sternly dealt with by God. For man has no righteousness of his own, and God abhors any pretense of it. A repentant heart will always receive the attention of God. The lost sinner should repent, not to man, but to God. A lost sinner should ask for forgiveness, not from man, but from God. God is the one who has been wronged in our sinning. He is the One from Whom we

#### PART 4. HOLINESS PRESENTED.

should seek forgiveness.

*"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

That's what Jesus told this woman. In other words, the correct mode of worship is in and from the heart. Here two isolated hearts meet: hers, isolated by sin; his isolated by holiness.

This woman had been accustomed to some of the practices and customs of religious worship of that day. But in those rituals there was no essence of Christ, there was no holiness; these things were powerless to take a sin-stained soul and make it pure in God's sight. But when we are saved by the power and grace of God our souls become pure and holy. Paul said in Hebrews 3:1:

*"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus . . ."*

All God's people are holy. The word holy simply means godly. We are not holy in the sense that we are sinless in our bodies, because we still sin in the flesh. But when saved, our souls are born of God and they cannot sin because we are partakers of God's nature insofar as the inner man is concerned.

The lost sinner should be taught that we will never be perfect in the flesh. Yet, we are holy, because all God's people are made holy as a result of the spiritual birth through which we receive God's nature in our souls. Thus, the only correct mode of worshipping God is to worship God in spirit and in truth, and worship from the heart.

Rituals and ceremonies cannot make one holy, neither do such things even attract the attention of God. God wants to dwell in the hearts and lives of His people, and He will dwell in those who will open their hearts to Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The only way to become holy is to become a child of God by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we become a child of God in this manner, which is the only way we can become a child of God, we receive the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. And the righteousness of Christ envelops us in lieu of any righteousness of our own.

#### PART 5. REVELATION.

This is the last step in the methods of Jesus. In this divine pattern of soul-winning we now see Him reveal Himself to her as the Messiah.

*"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."*  
She had heard about the Messiah. Probably she had not expected to meet Him face to face. But Jesus reveals to her now that He is the One, the One who had such love for lost sinners that He trod the trails of Palestine until He was footsore and weary.

After a person is convinced of his guilt before God, he must then understand that Jesus is the One through Whom we are saved. To have just a general knowledge of Jesus, as this woman did, is not enough. Everybody has heard about Jesus, but not all people have personally trusted Him as a Saviour. This woman had read about Him, BUT until she personally believed upon Him she was not blessed by her knowledge. Each individual must personally trust Christ in order to be saved. To have only a general knowledge of the death of Christ on the Cross will not avail the salvation of anyone.

Jesus died—that's history. Jesus died for me—that's faith. The sinner must be convinced that Jesus died for him personally, and his salvation depends upon his personal acceptance of the work of Christ on Calvary. Jesus must be revealed to the lost sinner as the Saviour, and the only Saviour, of men. Read Acts 4:12, John 10:9, John 14:6. All these Scriptures tell us that there is no other way except the blood-stained way.

Jesus was God revealed in the flesh. He is no longer here in the flesh, but His Spirit is abroad in the land seeking out the lost. Those who come to Him today will receive pardon and be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Those to whom He is revealed, and who then accept Him, will feel like doing as this woman did—going into the city and crying, *"Come see the man that told me all things that ever I did."*

Should we do any less? She went forth bearing the good news that Jesus saves. Should we do any less? The responsibility of soul-winning is not the general responsibility of the church; it is the individual responsibility of all of us who are members.

To win souls is wise:  
*"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever,"* Daniel 12:3.

#### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION AND MEDITATION

1. How long has it been since you spoke to someone about his soul?
2. Do you think that soul-winning should be left entirely to the pastor?
3. Do you think the Sunday school should be a medium for soul-winning?
4. Do you think Sunday school teachers have more opportunities to win the lost than those who are not teachers?
5. Do you think getting the unsaved to attend services and hearing the Gospel is one way of winning souls?
6. Why should we win souls?
7. Do you think there will be a reward for soul-winning?
8. What did Paul look forward to in I Thessalonians 2:19?
9. It has been said that the first desire in the heart of a new born child of God is to see others saved. Was that true in your case?
10. Has that desire grown cold over the years?
11. How can that desire be rekindled?
12. What do you think is responsible for the careless attitude shown by most church members today in regard to soul-winning?
13. If all our mission efforts resulted only in the salvation of one soul during the year, would these efforts be worthwhile if that soul belonged to your boy or girl?
14. Do you think our souls should be trifled with as we would trifle with a toy of some kind?

## Study 8

## A Study of the Second Advent

Scripture Reading: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep. For 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. Wherefore comfort (exhort) one another with these words," I Thessalonians 4:14-18.

INTRODUCTION—The second coming of our Lord is the basis of all our hopes, our ambitions, and the source of our comfort as a Christian. In the above Scripture notice how Paul urged us to comfort and exhort one another with these words, words concerning the coming of the precious Saviour.

We might disagree, and a lot of us do, as to the exact order of events when He shall come. However, the technical details are not so important. It is the fact of His coming, the glorious realization of this truth, that should thrill our souls. It especially brings comfort in the midst of sorrow and suffering in this world.

It is not our purpose in this brief study to settle all the theological problems relative to His coming. Neither should we endeavor to set the date of our Lords' return, for no man knows the date. Beware of date-setters, for those who would set the date of the Lord's return prove themselves to be ignorant of God's word. However, this does not mean that we should not study the subject. In fact, we are urged to study it and to "comfort one another with these words."

It is the writer's personal opinion that we are now living in the age when much prophecy is being fulfilled, and this is probably the age the Lord meant when He said in Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." The simple fact is that our Lord Jesus Christ might come at any time. It will be a grand, a glorious event—the event towards which all the ages have moved.

### PART 1. HIS COMING CERTAIN.

His coming is as certain as His word: John 14:3, "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."

His coming is as certain as His going away: Acts 1:11, . . . "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."

His coming is as certain as death: Hebrews 9:27-28, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So 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."

It is as certain as the resurrection: I Corinthians 15:23, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

We should be as certain about it as was Paul: II Thessalonians 2:1, "Now we

beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." There are numerous other Scriptures that teach us of His coming. With over two hundred and fifty New Testament references, directly or indirectly, teaching about His coming it is an event that is sure and certain.

### PART 2. A GLORIOUS COMING.

Matthew 16:27, "For 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."

Matthew 24:30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man coming and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ . . ."

Luke 21:27, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Mark 13:24-27, "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

His coming will be a glorious, dazzling event. There will be no need for the literal sun to shine because the Son of Righteousness will furnish light for His people.

Thessalonians 2:8, "And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Malachi 4:2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings . . ."

His first coming into the world was in humility that we might be saved. His second coming will be in power and great glory. The second coming will herald victory for Him and His people. At His first coming the world rejected Him, but at His second coming He will reject the world and all those who have spurned His mercy and grace. See Luke 19:14-28.

### PART 3. MANNER OF HIS COMING.

It will be sudden: Matthew 24:27, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Lightning strikes without warning, it comes suddenly. When lightning flashes across the sky you see the flash before you hear the sound of thunder. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be. People will have no more warning than they have already had. There will be no time to get out of the dives of the world when the Lord comes.

It will be universal: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west" so shall also the coming of the Lord be. From sea to sea and from shore to shore—the coming of the Lord will be universal. No one need think that he can escape.

His coming will be literal and physical. People who try to spiritualize the doctrine of the second coming of Christ are ignorant of the Scriptures. Here is proof:

In Acts 1:11, we are told that "this same Jesus" shall so come in like manner as He went away. He was here in physical form; He went away in physical form; He



is coming back literally and bodily. In Zechariah 14:4, we have these words: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west . . ."

Not only is He coming back as He went away—He is coming back to the same spot. His feet shall again touch the Mount of Olives—the same place from which He left as mentioned in Acts 1:11.

Those who would spiritualize the Second Advent, those who believe that All that is meant by His second coming is that He comes for us at death, or something of that sort, are really ignorant of the true teachings of the Bible. There is a word used in the original of the New Testament that forever precludes the idea of anything but a personal, physical, literal return of the Lord. The word is "parousia" and it means "bodily presence". It is so translated in II Corinthians 10:10. This same word is used with reference to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, although it is not so translated in our version of the Scriptures.

#### PART 4. PURPOSE OF HIS COMING.

One purpose is to raise the dead in Christ. I Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and shall descend—not another. And the dead in Christ shall rise first." "The Lord himself" when God's people are going to have priority. Oftentimes, we are last in the things of this life and this world, but a time is coming when God's people shall have priority.

He will translate the living saints. Verse 17 says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together (together with the dead in Christ) with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Nothing will be gained or lost by being alive or dead when the Lord comes if we are a child of His, because we are all going to be caught up together. Verse 15 says, ". . . that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep (dead in Christ)."

He comes to comfort His people. "Comfort one another with these words." In John 14:3, He says, "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." To be with Him where He is ought to be enough for any Christian. He will take us away from this world of sin and sorrow and we shall walk the streets of glory with Him for ever and ever.

He comes to reward the faithful. Revelation 22:12, "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." We have many blessings and joys in this life, but we do not receive rewards in this life. Our rewards will come when the Lord comes and we are taken to be with Him where He is. This is an incentive to faithfulness. We should desire something more than salvation, we ought to be faithful to the extent of storing up many rewards that shall come to us when we pass into the clearer light of God. For a full description of the Judgment of Christian Rewards study I Corinthians 3:12-15 and other Scriptures.

He comes to bring peace on the earth. At His first coming Jesus said, Luke 12:51, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division . . ." At His second coming there will be ushered in an era of peace such as the world has never known. But we will not have it until Jesus comes. The wisdom

of man cannot bring it about. The United Nations cannot accomplish it. But we have the definite certainty that it will one day be accomplished, not by men, but by the Prince of Peace.

He comes to smite the Man of Sin and put an end to his reign. See II Thessalonians 2:6-10. Lack of space forbids us going into this matter in detail. Suffice it to say that this writer believes that the second coming of our Lord will be in two phases. First, He comes for His Saints and they are raptured and taken out of the world. This is referred to in Scripture as the "appearing" of Christ in the air—He does not actually come to earth at this particular time. After the saints are raptured there will be a reign of wickedness and sin on the earth as never before, headed by the Man of Sin. After a period of time, a period during which we are with the Lord "in the air", the second phase of His coming takes place. At this time He sets foot on the Mount of Olives, and His saints are coming with Him. This is when He shall smite the Man of Sin and lead His people to complete victory. After this victory, His Millennial reign shall begin. And we shall reign with Him.

#### PART 5. SIGNS OF HIS COMING.

While no person knows the exact time of the Lord's coming, yet we are given certain signs whereby we might recognize just how far we have traveled down the road of time and towards that grand and glorious event.

There is the sign of present-day wickedness. See Matthew 24:36-42. This generation, generally speaking, is setting a hell-bound pace never matched in all history. The masses know not the doom that awaits them for such ungodly living. In this connection, do not fail to turn and read Jude verses 11 through 15 especially.

There is the sign that Paul mentions in II Timothy 3:1-7, a sign that describes the human race that has been living under the influence of sin all these centuries. Turn and read it.

There is the sign of certain physical phenomena. Luke 21:25 says, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars . . ." Things are taking place in the heavens today that the wisdom of man has been unable to explain. Matthew 24:7 says there shall be "earthquakes in divers places". Earthquakes have been increasing in frequency of late.

There is the signs of distress among nations. Luke 21:25 says, "upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity. The sea and the waves roaring." The "sea and the waves roaring" has reference to the restless sea of humanity surging against the tide of time. We have distress among nations as never before. We have always had distress among nations, but never before with such "perplexity". Statesmen are perplexed. No man knows the way out of the difficulty. That word "perplexity" means "no way out". And there is no way out, except the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is the sign of the Jews. If we had no other proof that God lives and that God remembers His promises. Much prophecy has already been fulfilled relative to these people. They are a nation again for the first time in hundreds of years. They are reclaiming the land of Palestine in a wonderful way. For the first time in history the Jew is becoming known as a tiller of the soil.

Much agony and suffering still await these people. God has not forgotten how they turned their backs upon the Messiah. God wrested the reigns of government from their hands and placed those reigns in Gentile hands. Now we are drawing to the end of the Gentile age. Great events are shaping up before us. One thing

we can be sure of, that out of this maze of confusion, the Lord shall come and set all things right.

### PART 6. WHAT HIS COMING MEANS TO THE LOST.

There will be a great separation take place when the Lord Jesus comes. The saved will be taken, but the lost will be left on earth to undergo the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:40 says, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

It is sad to think of how many families will be broken; children separated from parents, husbands, from wives, etc. But it is going to happen, just as sure as God's word is true.

But for the Lord's people it will be a grand and glorious time when Jesus parts the clouds of gloom and comes back for us. We shall never know sorrow again.

James 5:7-8, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

### QUESTION FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Do you think the Lord might come today?
2. If not, read Matthew 24:44.
3. Do you know of any major prophecy that must yet be fulfilled before the Lord comes?
4. What do you suppose will happen to Nero? Hitler and all the tyrants of the ages when they stand before the Lord?
5. What is said in I John 2:28?
6. Do you think it is blind pessimism to believe in the personal return of Jesus as the only remedy for a sin-sick world?
7. Can a Christian be comforted in his sorrows unless he is familiar with the truths taught in this lesson?
8. What did Jesus mean when He said, during His personal ministry on earth, that He didn't bring peace, but rather division?
9. Is that division still evident today?
10. Why do you suppose Jesus delays His coming until now?
11. Do you suppose the early followers of Jesus confused His first coming with His second coming?
12. Is that not responsible for the fact that they failed to understand why some things were not immediately performed by Him?
13. Did the Jews expect the Messiah to reign as a literal king, and were they disappointed when Jesus failed to do so?
14. Jesus will one day reign as the King of kings and Lord of lords. What will the Jews do with Him then?
15. What do you think will be the first thing to happen on earth when Jesus comes?
16. Do you think there will be many Christians found in undesirable places when the Lord suddenly comes?
17. Would you want to be found in the picture show when Jesus comes?

### Study 9

## The Kind of Church Members We Need

Scripture Reading: *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities (kinds) of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way,* I Corinthians 12:27-31.

Many of the gifts placed in the church belonged to the Apostolic age, and those gifts have passed away. The performing of miracles, for instance, belonged to that age and are not performed in this age. Miracles were performed during the days of Jesus on earth in order to convince the world of His Divinity. Today we have the complete word of God and the Holy Spirit of God to accomplish this purpose. Miracles convinced Nicodemus that Jesus was the Son of God. We read this in John 3:2: "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Jesus is not now here in Person. But He said: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Hence, we have no need of miracles today. In Apostolic days, miracles were for the purpose of confirming the Word. "Diversities of tongues", such as was seen on the day of Pentecost, simply means they spoke in various languages. These languages were translated, interpreted, so that all people heard the Gospel in their native tongue.

We need to study, in this connection, the 13th chapter of I Corinthians also. Paul closes that chapter with the admonition that only three of these spiritual gifts remain: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love)." And in the last verse of chapter 12, he says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

We should covet earnestly the best gifts and seek a more excellent way to serve the living God. And all our service to Him should come under the head of the three remaining gifts, faith, hope and love. Now let us see something of the kind of church members we need today.

### PART 1. MEMBERS THAT LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

II John 5, "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I write a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."

I John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." We do not pass from death unto life because we love the brethren, but WE KNOW that we HAVE passed from death unto life because we love them.

I John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

I John 4:16-17, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." How is our love made perfect? Verse 16 tells us "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." It is one thing to have a house—it is quite another thing to dwell in it. It is one thing to profess to love God and God's people—it is quite another thing to dwell in that love, to live in it, etc.

Let us notice the words of Peter, I Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Peter seems to be saying that our love should not be "feigned". The word means "giving mental existence to, as something not real." Some of our love for the people of God might fall into this category if we will but turn the light of God's truth upon it. Again, Peter seems to be saying that a general love for all God's people and the things of God is not enough: "... see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Our love should be a love for one another as individuals, and it should be a fervent love.

We might add that our love is not to be confined to the people of God. It is well for it to begin there, but it should overflow until we love the souls of all. Let us read Galatians 5:13-15 in this connection: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

A brief summary of all these Scriptures is simply this—God's work cannot prosper where the central theme of our efforts is not love.

## PART 2. WE NEED MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT SENSITIVE.

There are too many Christians who are overly-sensitive, and who take offense at the little "petty" and insignificant things that occur when associating together in a common cause. To be guilty of such is to lose our perspective as a Christian.

Human nature is frail. We all have faults. We may not have the same fault as the other person has—but it is possible for us to have one that is just as large, and maybe larger. We are often guilty of "measuring the other fellow's corn with our bushel". And therein lie difficulties.

What does Paul say about it in I Corinthians 13:5, where he is talking about love and loving one another? Let us read it: "... Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

This is the spirit that should characterize the true child of God. It involves consideration for others, it even places others first. We need more of this kind of spirit in our churches.

James warns us, also, against allowing ourselves to become a victim of a wrong spirit when he says, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," James 1:19.

We can't work the righteousness of God if we are over-sensitive to the faults of others. It just cannot be done. If we attend services expecting to get our "feelings

hurt", we usually are not disappointed.

The best remedy I know for this sort of thing is to remember the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose He had acted, during His Ministry upon earth, as many Christians act today? Suppose He had gone off and sat on a stump somewhere and "pouted" because somebody hurt His feelings? Did He get His feelings hurt? I imagine so, over and above anything that shall ever come our way. Yet, He allowed none of these things to prevent Him from doing the will of the Father because He loved us enough to endure them. And we should love Him enough to overcome our own disappointments and faults.

Paul warned Timothy against all such in I Timothy 6:4: "... He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings."

It is well to recall a Scripture we had in a lesson just a few weeks back, that of I Peter 5:5: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble."

Not to be overly-sensitive is one of the more excellent ways of serving the Lord.

## PART 3. WE NEED FORGIVING MEMBERS.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses," Mark 11:25.

What is the principle here? It is that we must forgive one another if we are to expect the Lord to forgive us. Why should the Lord forgive us when we fail to manifest the same spirit we are asking of Him?

When a person is truly sorry of a wrong inflicted it is our duty to go more than half-way in forgiving him. Let us read II Corinthians 2:7 in this connection: "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."

If we fail to forgive instantly the wrong that another person is sorry for then we are guilty of causing that person "overmuch sorrow", and we will be held accountable for such an act.

Our forgiveness should be unlimited. Jesus taught in Luke 17:4: "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Matthew 18:21-22, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" This number stands for completeness; we are to forgive as long as necessary.

Another important Scripture in this connection is found in Luke 6:36-37: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven . . ."

Our forgiveness should be real and from the heart. A superficial forgiveness is worthless, it is even hypocrisy. To make a profession of forgiveness with our mouth, and which does not come from deep within our hearts, is to invite God to deal with us according to the same manner. Turn now and let us read Matthew 18:35: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Notice the expression "from your hearts", this is a warning against superficial forgiveness.

The greatest pattern of all for our forgiveness was furnished by our Lord when He was suspended on the Cross of Calvary. He said, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*"

A more excellent way to serve the living God is to have a forgiving spirit. Perhaps we need more of such a spirit in our churches today. We cannot serve God acceptably unless we forgive our brother and fellow-man.

#### PART 4. WE NEED GIVING MEMBERS.

We need members who will give of their means. We need members who will give systematically of their means. In Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth, he said, I Corinthians 16:2: "*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*"

Let us analyze this verse. Paul said, "*upon the first day of the week,*" and in the original language it says "each first day". So there is a definite time when we are to give of our means. But what about all those church members who attend services only once-in-a-while? Are they carrying out these instructions? Not if they give only when they attend, unless they give an amount sufficient to make up for the times they were not there.

And then Paul said "*let every one of you.*" This brings it down to each individual. Many individuals have not realized their responsibility in this regard. Too many of them leave the giving to somebody else. They think the work will be carried on any way, so they are negligent about their own individual duty. If all church members would comply with Paul's instruction here, there would be sufficient money to support all phases of the work, and some left over. In this connection let us read some of Paul's instructions in regard to giving. This is found in II Corinthians 9:7: "*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*"

Now let us analyze that verse. As to what amount a man purposeth in his heart to give is beside the point right here. I have never had any trouble with the member who purposeth in his heart to give systematically, no matter what the amount is that he purposes to give. The thing I want us to notice in the above verse is simply this—we are not to give "of necessity". I interpret that to mean that we shouldn't wait until a project of some kind is suggested and then give because it is necessary. Too many churches operate on this principle in supporting missions and other phases of our work. It is better to give that way than not to give anything, but how much better it would be for us to give according to Paul's instructions, "*that there be no gatherings when I come.*" Here is your Scripture and example for a church treasury —members giving regularly and systematically and having a fund so that "*There be no gatherings when I come.*"

To mention missions only when a Missionary visits a church (and take an offering of necessity) is to fail to follow God's plan.

Luke 6:38, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*"

You can't beat God at giving.

We need members who will give of their time. The giving of our means is an important part of our service to God, but the mere giving of our means does not excuse us from the other duties placed upon us. This is a truth that is not known in many modern churches, so-called. People give of their means but they do not give of

their lives. Many of them live an ungodly life and seek to appease a sin-avenging God by their tithes and offerings. Thank the Lord it isn't true in most of our churches.

We should take time to apply daily the principles of Christianity. We should take time to be practical Christians, not mere professors.

We should give of our talents. All of us have talents that can be utilized of God. We do not all have the same talents, but we all have something that can be used by the Lord to His glory. We need to be an active member, letting the Lord use our talent, and not a member who "just belongs". There is a place for every member in the service of God. Each member ought to seek to find that place and occupy it in order to bring honor and glory to Him that saved us.

#### PART 5. WE NEED PRAYING MEMBERS.

In the twelfth chapter of Romans Paul speaks about many things that should characterize the life of the church member. Chiefly among them is prayer. In verse 12 he said: "*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.*"

In I Timothy 2:8, the same writer said: "*I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*"

In James 5:16 we have this admonition: "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"

Jesus spent much time in prayer, often alone. One example is found in Matthew 14:23: "*And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.*"

Jesus often spent the night in prayer. He has urged us to pray and we cannot properly discharge our responsibility as a Christian unless we are faithful in this respect. Many churches are cold because the membership does not remember to pray. A true church member should pray for each service; he should pray for the pastor; he should pray as the invitation is given. Without prayer we are not going to accomplish much in the way of service to God.

There are too many church members who leave all the praying to the pastor, and maybe a few other leaders in the church. Not only are they hindering the work in general, they are also denying themselves the joys and blessings that come from living close to the Lord.

As the late Peter Marshall was chaplain of the United States Senate, he prayed: "Our Father, we are beginning to understand at last that the things that are wrong with our world are the sum total of all things that are wrong with us as individuals. Thou hast made us after Thine image, and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in Thee."

We are too Christian really to enjoy sinning and too fond of sinning really to enjoy Christianity. Most of us know perfectly well what we ought to do; our trouble is that we do not want to do it. Thy help is our only hope. Make us want to do what is right, and give us the ability to do it.

In the name of Christ our Lord. AMEN."

#### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that church members should be guilty of having respect to persons?
2. What is said about this in James 2:1-6?

3. Do you think a church member should grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord?
4. Do you think we can do it without following the teachings of this lesson?
5. What is said in Hebrews 13:18?
6. What is said in James 1:22?
7. What is another qualification of a good church member mentioned in I Corinthians 15:28?
8. What are some others found in James 1:27?
9. Do you think a member who gives of his or her money, and never takes part in any of the other activities of the church, and who attends at irregular intervals, is fully doing the will of the Lord?
10. What is the first requirement of a good member?
11. Does the church today need more members or more true service on the part of the ones we already have?
12. Do you think your church will be instrumental in leading the lost to Christ if the membership is not a praying membership?
13. What is said in Hebrews 12:15?
14. Do you think it a good practice to pray for your enemies?
15. Should church members be concerned about the material needs of other church members?
16. What would you say is one of the major things in our lives today that keeps us from being a good church member?
17. Do you think you have as many faults as your brother or sister in Christ?
18. What is meant by "continuing instant in prayer"?
19. What is said in I John 3:18?
20. Should we not all seek to be better church members?

## No Tears in Heaven

Scripture Reading: Revelation 7:17 and 21:4, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And God shall wipe away all tears from thier eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

INTRODUCTION—In this world we often must weep. This world is a low-ground of sorrow. This has been true in all ages. But it is more pronounced in our day than ever before. The complex problems of life are being multiplied day by day. There is so much human suffering, agony and woe, that it almost brings one to despair. There is no need for us to despair, no matter what the circumstances of life might be. In John 16:33 Jesus said:

*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

So if we are to overcome the world and the sufferings of this present life, it must be through Him Who has conquered and overcome the world.

Jesus was a man of sorrows. Isaiah 53:3 says:  
*"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."*

At the grave of Lazarus we are told that "Jesus wept".  
 In Hebrews 4:14-15 we have these words:  
*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all parts tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is acquainted with our sorrows and griefs. And He is sympathetic and understanding of our problems and our woes. There is coming a time when He will take us out of this world of sorrow and into a land of sunshine and joy. We can behold it now by faith. One of the things that makes heaven so attractive to us now is the promise of the absence of certain things with which we are vexed in this world. Let us proceed to see about the absence of some of those things.

### PART 1. NO TEARS OF REPENTANCE IN HEAVEN.

In this world we often sin and disobey God. The true child of God will be sorry for such action, and he will repent of it. Many of God's children have shed tears of repentance because of their sinful deeds. David is an outstanding example. We, ourselves, oftentimes fail to measure up to God's expectations of us—and we are sorry for it and repent of it.

But there will be no tears of repentance in heaven, for the simple reason that the carnal nature that leads to disobedience shall be left behind when we enter that place of eternal abode. There are many things we do not know about the nature we shall have in heaven, but we can know enough to justify our belief that we shall leave this carnal nature behind. Let us read I John 3:2.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

To be like Christ—that should be good enough for anybody. The living Saints, together with the dead in Christ, shall be changed at the coming of the Lord. In I Corinthians, Verses 44 and 52, we have the words:

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

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."

This writer does not believe that we shall have a spiritual body in the sense that we shall float around in space; that we shall not have substance, or that we shall be something intangible. To have a spiritual body simply means that we shall have a body animated by the Spirit.

Whatever it means, we shall be free from our baser nature that corrupts us now, the nature that causes us to walk in disobedience to the Lord and for which we often shed tears of repentance in this life.

## PART 2. NO TEARS OF PITY IN HEAVEN.

The godly person must shed many tears in this life because of the pitiful conditions he sees in others.

We often shed tears of pity over those in distress. Our arms are sometimes too short, our strength too feeble, our means too small, to succor the many who are in pitiful circumstances. Perhaps we all could do more, yet we will never be able to alleviate all the sufferings of mankind. Tears will never be dried where sin abounds.

Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." There is a strange contrast pointed out in that Scripture. It is just as important for us to "weep with them that weep" as to "rejoice with them that do rejoice." Paul knew what the sufferings and trials of this world meant. That's why he said in Romans 8:18-19.

"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. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

In the 22nd verse of the same chapter he said:  
"For we know that the whole creation (every creature) groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now."

Until when? Until the redemption of our bodies, verse 23.

We have divine help in the matter of travailing over the sinful conditions of this world. We find this taught in verse 26 of this same chapter of Romans:

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

We should do what we can towards helping the less fortunate in this world, all the time looking forward to the time when there will be no tears of pity in heaven.

We should shed tears of pity over the unsaved who will not believe. Paul did; so did Jeremiah. They wept over the sinful condition of their people. And we should agonize in tears for those who will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 23:28.

"But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

It is better to weep now and rejoice in eternity than it is to laugh now and weep eternally. In Luke 6:21 Jesus said:

"Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh."

The true Christian cannot help but weep over the sinful and pitiful condition of this world. If he fails to weep over it, he must be entirely ignorant of God's word. He must have no conception whatever of Christianity, if he fails to discern this sad state of affairs.

## PART 3. NO TEARS OF DISAPPOINTMENTS IN HEAVEN.

Here we often have our noblest ambitions frustrated. We labor and toil only to meet with the tears of disappointment and failure. It shall not be so in heaven. Our aims shall be achieved.

The reason we must suffer disappointment in this world is because the world is under a curse, a curse placed upon it when Adam turned his back upon God in the Garden of Eden. Read it in Genesis 3:19:

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

This ban shall not be lifted as long as what we call time endures. We shall never be free from these limitations until we pass from the realm of mortal to the realm of the immortal. The Apostle Paul shed tears because of his disappointments. As an example we read II Corinthians 2:4:

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly for you."

Again in Acts 21:31 we save the words:  
"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Are we disappointed over our failure to win the lost? So was Paul. But there will be no disappointments in heaven if we have faithfully done our part in seeking to win them.

Our fondest hopes are blighted here, but it shall not be so in heaven. "God himself shall wipe away all tears" in that day.

Let us read again the words of the great warrior Paul in II Corinthians 4:8-11 and take courage:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

## PART 4. NO TEARS OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING IN HEAVEN.

How varied and numerous are the aches and pains that afflict us in these evil days. Science has made great strides in the study and cure of many diseases, but other diseases, unknown before, keep rising up to claim a terrible toll. With all our laws of sanitation, and our methods of treating the physically ill, God has ordained that man's allotted time upon earth shall be limited.

How many infirm people do you know? If you are not familiar with many, you ought to pass through some of our largest hospitals and other institutions. There is

an endless stream of suffering humanity passing through the portal of time. It shall always be so until we pass from the realm of suffering into the realm of glory.

Thank the Lord for such promises as the one found in Isaiah 35:4-6.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not, behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

There is the promise of the day beyond this night of time when physical suffering shall be known no more. Our bodies will not be wracked by pain. No medicine will be necessary in heaven because the Great Physician will be there, and He does not use medicine in His practice. He ministers to our deeper needs now, and He will do the same in heaven. Our mortal bodies, together with our capacity to suffer, will be left behind when we enter upon celestial shores.

Many of God's people are limited in their service to God because of physical disabilities and limitations. Paul even had a "thorn in the flesh". But in the day when we enter our heavenly abode our capacity to worship and serve God will not be limited. There will be no tears of physical suffering in heaven.

### PART 5. NO TEARS OF BROKEN TIES.

A lot of our sorrows now are caused by the principle of separation. This is especially true when death separates us from loved ones. But our text informs us that in the day there "shall be no more death."

Then will be fulfilled I Corinthians 15:54-55:

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," I Corinthians 15:26.

And what an enemy death is! It comes into our homes and robs us of those we love. It carries our children to the cemetery, and causes us to weep. But in heaven we shall never stand by a grave and see the bodies of our loved ones lowered into its dark confines. As Paul says in I Corinthians 15:57:

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There will be a grand reunion in heaven. In Matthew 8:11 Jesus says:

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

I think He meant that Abraham is going to be Abraham, and that Isaac is going to be Isaac, and that Jacob is going to be Jacob. In other words, they are to retain their identity. And so are we. If that is not so, why did Jesus use these words with reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

It is not wishful thinking to believe that we shall once again behold our loved ones, and even converse with them. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches us something about the future state. For one thing, it teaches that there is a great gulf between the two opposite places of eternal abode. And across that chasm nothing can pass that would mar the happiness of God's people for ever and ever.

"Those Holy Gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin and shame;  
None shall obtain admittance there  
But followers of the Lamb."

### PART 6. NO TEARS OF ALARMS IN HEAVEN

Many of our sorrows here are occasioned by the fact that we are afraid of what the future holds. Today the world is afraid that war will end death, and that the arm across the nations of the earth. And our fears are probably justified. The wisdom of men is never going to bring peace to this world. Only the Lord can do that.

But in heaven no such dangers will threaten. All the "former things" shall have passed away when we enter that place. We will not have to worry about providing for the future, the Lord Jesus Christ will take care of our every need. We won't have to worry about paying our bills, everything is free in that land of bliss and glory. Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

As a citizen of heaven we shall never hear the drums of war, or the sounds that attend carnal warfare. Jeremiah said in chapter 4, verse 19: "I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

And we are pained in our hearts today because of earthly conflicts, but we have the assurance that one day wars shall be no more.

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Let us calm our fears with the words spoken by Paul in Philippians 3:20: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

### QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Do you think we weep as much over the sinful condition of this world as we should?
2. Should not the truths of this lesson cause us to have more faith and zeal in the Master's work?
3. Do you think it a pitiful thing that there are multitudes of people who are not familiar with the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?
4. What is said in Jeremiah 13:17?
5. What did the Jews say when Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus?
6. Does not that fact alone show the humanity of Jesus?
7. Do you think Jesus is concerned with our sorrows and griefs?
8. Explain Acts 21:13.
9. Is there a promise that if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him?
10. Explain James 4:9.
11. What is said in Mark 5:39?
12. Do you think the physical body of our Lord while He was here on earth

was subject to pain and disease?

13. What is said in Psalms 126:6?
14. What is meant in Psalms 126:5?
15. What is meant by "storing up treasures in heaven"?
16. What is meant by Luke 20:37-38?
17. Where do you think the soul goes immediately after death?
18. Where do you think the final heaven will be located?
19. Do you think it will be a literal place and a thing of substance?
20. Do you think we will be angels in heaven?

### PROGRAM 3

1. OPENING SONG: "Joy to the World".
2. ROLL CALL: Members answering with a verse of Scripture containing the word "gift".
3. PRAYER.
4. REMARKS BY PROGRAM CHAIRMAN: There is a time in the year when the giving of gifts is very predominant. At that time, and at any time, we should think reverently of the greatest of all gifts.
5. SPECIAL SONG: "*I Gave My Life for Thee.*"
6. OFFERTORY.
7. SCRIPTURE: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift,"  
II Corinthians 9:15.

### GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

1. "What must be the nature of One Who would offer such a gift?" John 3:16.
2. "What must be the attitude of the person who would accept such a gift?" Ephesians 2:8; James 1:17.
3. "Why is the gift called unspeakable?" I Timothy 3:16.
4. "Why Should the gift be accepted?" Romans 6:23.
5. "How may the gift be accepted?" Acts 8:20.
6. "It is the greatest of all gifts," Romans 5:18.

BENEDICTION.



## Women's Auxiliary Studies

## SHALL WE BREAK FAITH?

ELDER ROY SIMS

Shall we break faith with those who sleep  
 Beneath the bloody soil,  
 Who gave their lives in sacrifice  
 To Satan's heartless spoil,  
 And fell beneath his mighty stroke,  
 True martyrs of the past,  
 Who quit like men, and in the fight,  
 Were faithful to the last?  
 Shall we break faith?

Shall we break faith with men whose blood  
 Cries out from all ages,  
 Who made the blood-drenched Word their guide  
 With tear-stains on its pages,  
 Who blazed the trail, and marked our path  
 With landmarks, sure and proven,  
 That stand as markers of our faith,  
 And shall we now remove them?  
 Shall we break faith?

Shall we break faith with those who died  
 By fire and sword and dungeon,  
 Who stand as landmarks of our faith  
 From Stephen down to Bunyan,  
 And in this last and faithless age  
 Give up the age-long story  
 To join the rank and file of men  
 For vain and earthly glory?  
 Shall we break faith?

Can we afford to quit the faith?  
 I answer back, NO NEVER . . .  
 If we break faith with those who sleep,  
 Their cries will haunt us ever . . .  
 We shall stand true until the last,  
 And earnestly contending  
 For faith once given to the saints,  
 Until we see the ending . . .  
 We shall keep faith.

## Women's Auxiliary Studies

## DEVOTIONAL STUDIES

## Seven "Walks" of Ephesians:

1. "Trespases and sins wherein in time past ye walked." (2:2).
2. "Good works—we should walk in them." (2:10).
3. "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." (4:1).
4. "Walk not as other Gentiles walk." (4:17).
5. "Walk in love". (5:2).
6. "Walk as children of light." (5:8).
7. "Walk circumspectly." (5:15).

## "Better Things" in Hebrews:

1. Better hope. (7:19).
2. Better Testament. (7:22).
3. Better covenant. (8:6).
4. Better promises. (8:6).
5. Better sacrifices. (9:23).
6. Better substance. (10:34).
7. Better resurrection. (11:35).
8. Better country. (11:16).
9. Better things. (12:24).

## Christ Communicates Eternity of Existence to Everything He Touches:

1. His throne is forever. (Hebrews 1:8).
2. His salvation is eternal. (Hebrews 5:9).
3. His priesthood is unchangeable. (Hebrews 7:24).
4. His redemption is eternal. (Hebrews 9:12).
5. His inheritance is eternal. (Hebrews 9:15).
6. His kingdom cannot be moved. (Hebrews 12:28).
7. His covenant is everlasting. (Hebrews 13:20).
8. He is Himself the same, yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8).

## Why the Blood of Christ is Precious:

1. Because it redeems us. (I Peter 1:19).
2. Because it brings us nigh. (Ephesians 2:13).
3. Because it blots out our sins. (Revelation 1:5).
4. Because it brings peace. (Colossians 1:20).
5. Because it justifies. (Romans 5:9).
6. Because it cleanses from sin. (I John 1:7).
7. Because it gives boldness in the day of judgment. (Hebrews 10:19).

## Five Aspects of Crucifixion in Galatians:

1. I crucified Christ. (2:20).
2. Christ crucified for me. (3:1).
3. The flesh crucified in me. (5:24).
4. The world crucified unto me. (6:14).
5. I crucified unto the world. (6:14).

## What Loving God Means, Romans 13:9-10:

1. Love to God will admit no other gods.
2. Love resents everything that debases its object by representing it by an image.
3. Love to God will never dishonor His name.
4. Love to God will reverence His day.
5. Love of parents makes one honor them.
6. Hate, not love, is a murderer.
7. Lust, not love, commits adultery.
8. Love will give, but never steal.
9. Love will not slander or lie.

## Seven Classes of People in John 6:

1. Curious. (verse 2).
2. Admiring. (verse 14).
3. Greedy. (verse 26).
4. Skeptical. (verse 36).
5. Murmurers. (verse 41).
6. Scoffers. (verse 52).
7. Backsliders. (verse 66).

## Of Redemption It May Be Said That:

1. It is finished. (Hebrews 11:24-28).
2. It is perfect. (Hebrews 11:7-14).
3. It is personal. (John 3:16).
4. It is satisfactory. (Romans 10:4)
5. It was timely. (Galatians 4:4).
6. It is eternal. (Ephesians 4:30; 1:14; Romans 8:23; Hebrews 11:12).

## The Holy Spirit:

1. Strives with sinners. (Genesis 6:3).
2. He reproves of sin. (John 16:3).
3. He helps our infirmities. (Romans 8:24).
4. He comforts. (Acts 9:3).
5. He teaches. (John 14:26).
6. He guides. (John 16:13).
7. He sanctifies. (Romans 15:16).
8. He testifies of Christ. (John 15:26).
9. He glorifies Christ. (John 16:14).
10. He searches all things. (Romans 11:33-36).
11. Worketh according to His own will. (I Corinthians 13:4).
12. He dwells in saints. (John 14:17).
13. He may be grieved. (Ephesians 4:30).
14. He may be vexed. (Isaiah 63:10).
15. He can be resisted. (Acts 7:51).
16. He can be tempted. (Acts 5:9).
17. He can be quenched. (I Thessalonians 5:19).

## Characteristics of Prayer in James 5:

1. Individual prayer, "let HIM pray". (verse 13).
2. United prayer, "Let THEM pray". (verse 14).
3. Believing prayer, "The prayer of FAITH". (verse 15).
4. Intercessory prayer, "pray ONE FOR ANOTHER". (verse 16).
5. Fervent prayer, "The effectual FERVENT prayer." (verse 16).
6. Definite prayer, "that it might not rain." (verse 17).
7. Effectual prayer, "And the heavens gave rain." (verse 18).

## The "I Wills" of the Lord on Behalf of His sheep in Ezekiah 34:10-29.

1. I will search them and seek them out. (verse 11).
2. I will deliver them. (verse 12).
3. I will bring them out. (verse 13).
4. I will gather them together. (verse 13).
5. I will bring them in. (verse 13).
6. I will feed them. (verse 14).
7. I will cause them to lie down. (verse 15).
8. I will bring up the broken. (verse 16).
9. I will strengthen the sick. (verse 16).

"Consider the Lilies", Luke 12:27.

The lily is mentioned seven times in the Bible (not including parallel passages).

1. Christ—the Lily of the Valley. Song of Solomon 2:1.
2. Christ—His sweetness, lips like lilies. Song of Solomon 5:13.
3. Christ—feeds among His lilies. Song of Solomon 2:16.
4. Christ—gathers His lilies. Song of Solomon 6:2.
5. Church—a lily among thorns. Song of Solomon 2:2.
6. Christian—shall grow as a lily. Hosea 14:5.
7. Christian—learn to trust from the lilies. Matthew 6:28.

The Two Great Families:

#### 1. THE NATURAL

Origin: "That which is born of the flesh." John 3:6.

Nature: "Is flesh". John 3:6. "After the flesh". Romans 8:5.

Standing: "In the flesh." Romans 8:5.

Inclination: "Mind the things of the flesh." Romans 8:5.

Result: "Death". Romans 8:6.

#### 2. THE SPIRITUAL

Origin: "That which is born of the Spirit." John 3:6.

Nature: "Is Spirit". John 3:6. "After the Spirit." Romans 8:5.

Standing: "In the Spirit". Romans 8:9.

Inclination: "Mind the things of the Spirit." Romans 8:5.

Result: "Life and peace". Romans 8:6.

The Twos in Matthew 7:

1. Two gates—straight, and wide.
2. Two ways—broad, and narrow.
3. Two classes—many, and few.
4. Two destinations—life, and destruction.
5. Two trees—good, and corrupt.
6. Two fruits—good, and evil.
7. Two things done to trees—hewn down, and cast out.
8. Two houses.
9. Two foundations—rock, and sand.
10. Two builders—wise, and foolish.
11. Two storms.
12. Two results—the one house stood, the other fell.

Seven "Forty Days" of the Bible:

1. Forty days of sin and judgment. Genesis 7:4, 12, 17.
2. Forty days of law and mercy. Exodus 24:18; 34:28.
3. Forty days of faith and unbelief. Deuteronomy 9:9; Numbers 13:14.
4. Forty days of human weakness and divine strength. I Kings 19:1-8.
5. Forty days of repentance and forgiveness. Jonah 3.
6. Forty days of conflict and victory. Luke 4:2.
7. Forty days of redemption and glory. Acts 1:3.

They That Trust in the Lord Are Like:

1. A tree planted by the waters. Jeremiah 17:8.
2. A green olive tree. Psalms 52:8.
3. A green fir tree. Hosea 14:8.
4. A palm tree. Psalms 92:12.
5. A cedar in Lebanon. Psalms 92:12.
6. A vine. Hosea 14:7.
7. Willows. Isaiah 44:4.
8. A shock of corn. Job 5:26.
9. A lily among thorns. Song of Solomon 2:2.
10. A branch. Proverbs 11:28.

The Wicked Are Like:

1. Bird's caught in a snare. Ecclesiastes 9:12.
2. Fishes taken in the net. Ecclesiastes 9:12.
3. Sheep laid in the grave. Psalms 49:14.
4. Deaf adder. Psalms 58:4.
5. Ravening lion. Psalms 17:12.
6. Heath in the desert. Jeremiah 17:6.
7. A bier. Micah 7:4.
8. A green bay tree. Psalms 37:35.
9. Grass, green herb. Psalms 37:2.
10. The chaffs. Psalms 1:4.
11. The stubble. Psalms 83:13.

## Power for Doing the Lord's Work

(Haggai 2:4)

### OUTLINE STUDY

The prophet Haggai was stirring up the people, especially Zerubbabel and others, concerning the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. He called upon them to compare the Temple as it then was to the former temple, or the temple before it had become so dilapidated. He did this to inspire them to rebuild, or remodel, the temple. Zerubbabel knew it would require a lot of power or strength to do the work, but he also knew there was One who would strengthen them for the great responsibility and work. Here we have a revelation of the Christian's power for work and service. Note the following:

#### I. THE ASSURING PROMISE

**"I am with you."** See also Philippians 4:13; John 15:5. We do nothing of ourselves; we must rely upon the Almighty God for strength to serve and work for Him.

#### II. THE INSPIRING COMMAND

**"Be Strong."** See also Ephesians 6:10. We rely too much on our intellectuality, or our financial strength, or our prestige. But we need to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. We are told by the prophet Zechariah that it is **"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."**

#### III. THE HIGH AND NOBLE PURPOSE

**"Be strong . . . and work."** The purpose of strength is to be able to work; many men have great natural ability, but they are not strong in the Lord because it is not their purpose to work for the Lord. They use their strength for selfish ends.

—Dr. J. E. Cobb

BEAMS OF GLORY, 75c

## Plan of Salvation

What is the salvation of the soul? It is deliverance from sin and spiritual death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27.) Man makes much preparation for his life here on earth. He places great value on temporal things; yet life is uncertain. He has no assurance of a long life . . . he has no way of knowing what is his appointed time on this earth. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1.) Since death is certain, how man needs to prepare for it! How can he do this?

He must feel his need for salvation; he must come to realize that everyone . . . the morally upright, as well as the worst reprobate . . . needs to be saved. The following Scripture denotes that all have sinned: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." (Eccl. 7:20.) He must see that a great gulf separates him from God; that gulf is sin. He must become aware of his own weakness and inability to save himself.

He cannot do enough good things within himself to please God, or to merit His favor. "For we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Is. 64:6.) Salvation is, rather, a gift from God. "For by grace (love) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8, 9.) God loved the world enough to give His Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (Read John 3:16, 17, 18.) How, then, can man please God? He can please him by accepting the Gift: His Son.

There is only one door through which man can go to God . . . that door is Jesus Christ. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me." (John 14:6.) Jesus is the perfect Savior in that He is both divine and human. He could not sin, for He was God (in the flesh); yet He understands us and loves us when we sin, because He was tempted while here on earth just as we are tempted daily. He is man's best friend as well as Savior.

Should anyone present you with a gift, you would not likely accept it if you knew that you would be required to return it the next day or the following week. The Lord doesn't give salvation and then take it away. When man looks to Jesus for salvation his name is written in the Book of Life . . . never to be erased. He has an "incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for him; he is kept by the power of God." (Read I Peter 1:3, 4, 5.) Jesus has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) It is impossible for man to be lost after he has once trusted in Jesus. Jesus suffered (not just physically, but in His heart as well), died, arose from the grave, and ascended back to heaven . . . for **you**. Do you have a lost and undone feeling in your heart? Do you realize that God may be speaking to you through His Holy Spirit? If so, won't you look to Him for life everlasting? Won't you accept the greatest gift of all time?

## Devotional Illustrations

### On the Folly of Procrastination:

"There are wonderful things we are going to do  
Some other day;  
And harbors we hope to drift into  
Some other day;  
With folded hands and oars that trail,  
We wait and watch for a favoring gale  
To fill the folds of an idle sail,  
Some other day.

"We know we must toil if ever we win  
Some other day;  
But we say to ourselves, there's time to begin  
Some other day.  
And so, deferring, we loiter on,  
Until at last we find withdrawn  
The strength and hope we leaned upon  
Some other day."

### ON CROSS-BEARING

Tom Sexton was a "Blacksmith Evangelist". He was an ignorant man whose genuine religious experience, told over and over in the crudest language, led many to Christ. This is the way Tom Sexton in one of his meetings described a Bible scene:

"I can just imagine Paul and Silas there with their feet in the stocks and their backs all cut up and bleeding, and everything looking like it was against them, death seeming to be in front of them; and Paul say, 'Strike up a hymn, Silas'. But Silas says, 'My back's hurting me so, and they've got the stocks round my feet so tight, that I can't sing'. Then Paul says, 'Well, we've got to have a hymn, if I have to start it up my self'. I don't know what hymn Paul started up," continued the blacksmith, "but I believe if they knew this hymn, it would be this:

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,  
And all the world go free?  
No, There's a cross for everyone,  
And there's a cross for me.'"

### ON FORGIVENESS

In a Scottish village lived a doctor noted for his skill and piety. After his death, when his books were examined, several accounts had written across them in red ink: "Forgiven . . . too poor to pay."

His wife, who was of a different disposition, said: "These accounts must be paid." She therefore sued for the money. The judge said: "Is this your husband's handwriting in red?" She replied that it was. "Then," said the judge, "there is not a tribunal in the land that can obtain the money where he has written 'Forgiven'."

So when Christ says, "Thy sins are forgiven," we are released from the penalty of our sins.

### ON THE GREATEST QUESTION

There comes a time in the history of every man when a certain old question is asked, which we find in the book of Job. "If a man die shall he live again?" Where shall we go for an answer to that question?

We ask Science, and Science frankly says, "We know nothing of the resurrection." Then we ask Philosophy, and Philosophy says, "I admit there may possibly be a hereafter, and immortality and a resurrection, but I have no answer that can wipe away your tears." But this Sunday morning we hear the sound of the church bells, and there we find the glorious message of Christ's resurrection, which is a guarantee of ours.

"Forever with the Lord,

Amen, so let it be.

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality."

### ON BREATH AND PRAYER

It is an old question, but it may be well to answer it again. That is, "What good does it do to breathe?" The answer is, our bodies would soon be dead if we did not breathe. "What good does it do to pray?" The answer is, our spiritual nature will waste away when we do not pray. It is good to pray for it means life to the best part of our being.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,

The Christian's native air."

There are three results of prayer. First, God hears and answers prayer. Second, we are drawn nearer to Him and made a part of His great being. Third, there comes a peace to our heart and life, because we feel the sureness of God's love and power.

## ON PLANS FOR ETERNITY

A Christian, meeting a bright and brilliant boy, asked him what he was going to do. "I am going to college to prepare for the work of life," he answered. And what was he going to do then, the man asked. "Then I am going to become my father's partner and be a rich man," the boy replied. And what then? "Then I am going to marry and have a home of my own." And what then? "Why, I suppose my father will die sometime, and I shall be the head of the business." Well what then? "When I have amassed a large fortune, I am going to retire and spend a happy old age in a country mansion." And what then? "Oh," he said, dropping his head, "I suppose I must die myself at last." Yes, and what then? The young man was silent.

There are many mansions in the Father's house, but is there one for you?

## ON GOD HOLDING OUR HAND

Dwight L. Moody told this story: It makes a great deal of difference whether you take hold of God or God takes hold of you. Said a father: "My little girl today refused to let me take hold of her hand when we were walking together. She thought she could go alone. But when we came to a place which was slippery, she took hold, first of my little finger, and then, as it grew more icy, of my whole hand. As we went on, and it was growing worse, she let go entirely, and said, 'Papa, take hold of me'."

"She knew I was strong and that she could not fall unless I fell. Now," said he, "I have been slipping, slipping for the last eleven years, and the reason is that I have not put my hand into the hand of God. I have been trying to take hold of Him, but not asking Him to take hold of me. As long as He has hold of my hand, I can't fall. He would have to be dethroned first. If our hands are placed in His whose throne is in heaven, we never can fall down into hell."

## ON DOING GOOD

I was sitting by a friend on the front seat in a large congregation; the doxology was sung without announcement at the end of a hymn. "Let us stand up" she whispered, and rose to her feet. I turned to see, and the whole audience was following her example.

Observe the people in a public place where there is a "nickel-in-the-slot" music machine. If one drops in a coin, half a dozen others follow. If a beggar gets something from the first man in a row of seats, he is successful all along the line; if the first man shakes his head, it is hardly worth while to go on. Such little things illustrate our social human nature. We are like sheep: when one goes thru a hole in the fence, we all follow.

How beautiful to lead in the right direction. We may do more good in this way than by all the eloquence of preaching. Indeed, living is the most effective method of preaching. Paul believed his example was more weighty than words; he says, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

## The Healing Waters

Ezekiel 47:1-12

The mystical river here portrayed is full of prophetic significance. During the Millennial reign rivers of living water shall flow forth from the sanctuary of the holy city into the desert wastes of the earth. See Zechariah 14:8. And "everything shall live whither the river cometh." See verse 9.

But this river may also be taken to stand for the fulness of the gospel of Christ, and of the refreshing power of the Holy Spirit within us. Let us consider:

## I. THE WATERS

A river, a free spontaneous outburst.

1. Its Source. Out from under the threshold of the house, the temple. Out from the Holy of Holies, the throne of God. Like the Spirit, it emanated from the Father, verse 1.

2. Its Course. Down by the south side of the altar; down by the cross of Jesus Christ. Verse 1.

3. Its Force. It increased in power and plentitude, though it had no tributary. The streams of earth can add nothing to the river of God. It became a river that could not be passed over. It had power (1) to heal, (2) to revive, and (3) to make fruitful and provide freshness. See verses 8, 9, 12. Such is the power of the Holy Spirit working in those who believe as the Scriptures hath said, John 7:38, 39. It is a symbol of the boundless and unsearchable riches of Christ and the love of God.

## II. THE GROWING EXPERIENCE OF THE RIVER'S DEPTH AND POWER

In his obedience to the divine Leader, Ezekiel was brought in his vision into a progressive experience of this fullness of blessing. We are told three times that "He brought me through." This indicates that these were not final conditions, but the way to something deeper and better—a passing experience. Note the following:

1. Ankle deep. See Genesis 3:15, 16. Here was the first intimation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. To believe in it, to accept the Satan bruiser was life, but it was, so to speak, but a shallow experience with the river of life, but they that believed were in it. See verse 3. "He brought me through" the first revelation of the way of salvation.

2. Knee Deep. Again Ezekiel was brought through the waters and they were knee deep. A still deeper revelation, but yet not a full and complete revelation, but sufficient that one could actually get into the stream; there was life in getting in, by believing. This refers, no doubt, to the types and shadows of the law; these were so to speak, elementary revelations, but they were sufficient that men found the river and found life in God through Christ, for these all spake of Christ.

3. Loin Deep. Again the prophet was brought through and the waters were loin deep. The stream is widening and deepening, but it will get deeper still. Here evidently, we have the prophecies of Jesus as Saviour; as Prophet, Priest and King. The prophets gave a fuller, deeper revelation of the coming Saviour, but a yet deeper revelation is coming.

4. An Impassable River. Now, the river has become so deep, so wide, he could no longer pass through, but the waters could bear him up. This is the fulness of blessing in Christ. Christ was the fulness of God, and He revealed God in His fulness of blessing.

"O, the joy of sins forgiven,  
O, the bliss the blood-bought know;  
O, the peace akin to heaven,  
Where the healing waters flow.

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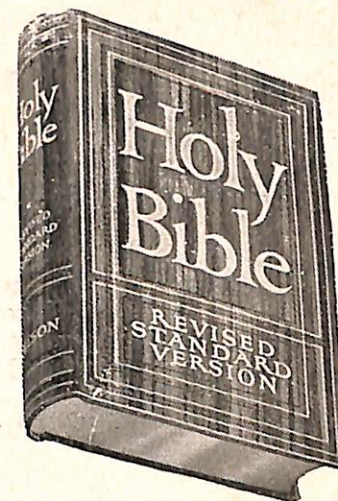
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