

Joseph Stump

Bible Teachings

A Summary View of
Christian Doctrine and Character



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Bible Teachings

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Bible Teachings:

A Summary View of Christian Doctrine and Christian Character, Drawn From The Word of God

*Fifth Grade Textbook in the Lutheran Graded System for
Intermediate Sunday Schools.*

By Joseph Stump, A.M.

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

Joseph Stump (1866-1935) studied at Capital University and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He taught at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, where he was also President.

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A Note about Typos [Typographical Errors]:

Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

Preface

This Textbook aims to present the doctrinal and practical teachings of the Bible in a form suited to the comprehension of the intelligent youth of our Church. It is to be borne in mind, that the book is intended for use in the Fifth Grade of a complete course of Biblical instruction, and that it presumes on the part of the pupil a somewhat advanced intelligence and an acquaintance with the four books which precede it in the series. Fifteen years may be taken as the average age at which the pupil is supposed to reach this stage of the Graded Series of instruction.

The book presents Christian doctrine and Christian character, as both are drawn from the words of the Bible. It sums up the Biblical teachings concerning divine truth and human life, and presents the principles of the Christian religion both for the guidance of faith and intellect and for the formation of character. It endeavors to concentrate both the doctrinal and practical strength of God's Word, and to give the substance of dogmatics and ethics in Biblical and popular form with sufficient comprehensiveness to enable those who use it faithfully "to give a reason of the hope that is in them," and to train up the youth to an appreciation of the substantial, adequate and life-controlling character of the doctrines of God's Word.

Throughout the work the aim has been to draw the teachings of the Bible directly from the sacred record itself. Technical theological terms have been introduced only where it has been deemed necessary to make their meaning clear to the pupil. It is hoped that the Scripture references cited in the margin will lead many to an earnest searching of the Holy Book for its words of truth and life.

Whatever aspect of a Biblical doctrine promised to be most helpful to the pupil has been adopted. It will be found, therefore, that some chapters are prevaingly doctrinal in character, others are critical and apologetic, and still others slightly historical; while the ethical and parenetical element has

been permitted to pervade many parts of the book which are more strictly doctrinal in character.

The order followed is that suggested by the doctrines themselves. The first half, or doctrinal part of the book, will be found to correspond in a general way with the threefold division of the Apostles' Creed, though a strict adherence to its order has not been found feasible. In the second half, or practical part, which treats of Christian character and life, reference is made at proper points to the corresponding commandment of the Decalogue.

May the Lord, whose work this book is intended to do, add His blessing as it goes forth upon its mission.

J. S.

1. Concerning God. That God Is. Who And What He Is.

It is only through the Bible that we can learn to know God.

Conscience

It is true, men know even without the Bible that there is a Higher Being. The belief in the existence of God is implanted in every heart, (Rom. 1:19) and is found among all nations, even the most barbarous and degraded. All men have a conscience which teaches them to distinguish between good and evil, and bids them expect punishment from a divine judge if they do wrong. (Rom 2:14,15)

The Order of the World

The works of nature confirm this natural belief in the existence of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."(Ps. 19:1) The very fact that the world exists demands that there be One who has created it. And in the variety, order and beauty apparent in nature on every hand, in the alternation of day and night, in the succession of the seasons, and in the marvelous manner in which the earth is adapted to supply the wants of the creatures who dwell upon it, there is so evident a proof of wise and beneficent design,(Ps. 104:24) that none but a fool can say, "All this came into existence by itself or by chance."(Ps. 14:1)

The Bible Needed

But neither conscience nor nature can give a sufficient and saving knowledge of God. Left to this natural knowledge, men became idolaters, and “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.” (Rom. 1:23) It is not sufficient to know that there is a God. We must know what kind of a God He is, how we can be received into His love, and how we should live in His sight. This we can learn only from the Bible. Let us see, therefore, what the Bible teaches about God.

The Three in One

There is but one God. When He gave His commandments to men, God said, “I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” (Exod. 20:2,3) But, although there is only one God, there are three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Hence we speak of God as the Trinity, or the Three in One. Of these three Persons, none is greater or less than the other, but all are equal in every respect. “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.”¹ This is a mystery which we cannot comprehend. It is not to be expected that we should. The finite is unable to comprehend the infinite. There are many things in the world around us which we cannot understand. How can we understand Him who created the world? What we can and are to do is to receive the knowledge of God as He Himself has revealed it to us.

The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are named in Christ’s command to His disciples, when He said, “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matt. 28:19) And they are revealed at Christ’s baptism, where the Holy Ghost descended on Christ in the form of a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven and said, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:16,17)

What God Is

God is a Spirit. (John 4:24) He therefore has no body and no limbs and senses as we have. We sometimes speak of God’s almighty arm and His all-seeing eye. The Scriptures themselves sometimes speak of Him in this

manner. But this way of speaking is used simply to accommodate our idea of God to human ways of thinking, because for us power to do lies in the arm, and power to see in the eye.

God is a Spirit of infinite power and majesty, without limits or bounds, (1 Kings 8:27) and of absolute perfection. (Matt. 5:48) “He fills heaven and earth.” (Jer. 23:24)

[1] He is **Eternal**. There never was a time when God was not, and there never will be a time when He is not. He is from everlasting to everlasting. (Ps. 90:2)

[2] He is **Unchangeable**. He Himself declares, “I am the Lord, I change not.” (Mal. 3:6) He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8) What He now is He always has been and always will be.

[3] He is **Omnipresent**, that is, He is present everywhere at the same time. There is no nook or corner of the wide universe where God is not. (Ps. 139:7-10) He is ever beside us, wherever we may be. (Matt. 28:20)

[4] He is **Omniscient**, that is, He knows all things. Past, present and future are equally present to His view. Nothing can escape His knowledge. He reads and knows every thought, desire and purpose of our hearts. (Ps. 139:2)

[5] He is **Omnipotent** or **Almighty**. His power is unlimited. Nothing is impossible with God, (Luke 1:37) though of course He cannot do anything which is in conflict with His own nature, such as to lie (Titus 1:2) or do evil of any kind. (1 Pet 1:15,16)

In His Relation to Us

[1] God is **Holy**. The angels Who stand before His throne continually sing, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.” (Is. 6:3) He is holy Himself and demands that we be holy also. (Lev. 19:2)

[2] He is **Just**. He requires the fulfillment of His holy laws, (Gal 3:10) and will punish the guilty, rendering to every man according to his deeds. (Rom 2:6)

[3] He is **All-wise**. (Col 2:3) He always knows what is best to be done, and what is the best way to accomplish His ends. (Eph 1:8)

[4] He is **Kind and Merciful**. He is Love itself. (1 John 4:8) He is kind even to the unthankful; for “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt 5:45) His mercies are new unto us every morning. (Lam. 3:22,23) He has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from His way and live.” (Ezek. 33:11) His love to the world is so great that “He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) He bears long with the impenitent and desires to lead them to repentance by His goodness. (Rom 2:4)

[5] He is **Faithful** (2 Tim. 2:13) and True. (Num. 23:19) He will do all that He has threatened or promised. He is the one Being in all the universe on whom absolute reliance may be placed. (Ps. 100:5, Rom. 10:11)

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1. Quoted from the Athanasian Creed. See Churh Book p. 266.↩

2. God Made, Maintains And Rules The World.

God Made the World

The world did not always exist, nor did it come into being by itself or by chance. It is the work of God. (Ps. 102:25) He alone is from eternity: (Ps. 90:2) all other things had a beginning and have their source and origin in Him; (1 Cor. 8:6) for “of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” (Rom. 11:36) He willed that the world should be, and it came into being. “He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.” (Ps. 33:9)

The Manner

The manner in which God made the world is described in the first two chapters of the Bible. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) He made them out of nothing. (Heb. 11:3) The heaven and earth thus created were not, however, the beautiful heaven and earth we now behold, but a formless, shapeless mass, — the raw material out of which God subsequently in six days fashioned the world as it now is. At first “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” (Gen. 1:2) But “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” (Gen. 1:2) preparing the shapeless, lifeless mass for the creative Word. And then in six successive “days” God (1) created the light and separated it from the darkness, (2) made the firmament, (3) divided the dry land from the sea and covered it with plant life, (4) set the sun, moon and stars in their places, (5) made the fishes and the birds, (6) the beasts of the field and finally man. (Gen. 1:3-31) On the seventh day God rested from His work, and hallowed the day. (Gen. 2:2,3)

The Creation of Man

The creation of man was the last and crowning work. For “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” (Gen. 1:27) He “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2:7) Woman was made to be a helpmeet for man, and was created by God out of a rib taken from man’s side while he was asleep. (Gen. 2:18, 21, 22)

Creation is the work of the Triune God. The Son (1 Cor 8:6; Eph. 3:9) and the Holy Ghost (Gen. 1:3) took part in it with the Father. But it is ascribed to God the Father by preeminence. It is thus ascribed to Him in the Apostles’ Creed.

God Maintains the World.

God did not create the world and then let it exist by itself, nor let it run like a watch or clock till it is worn out. He constantly maintains and preserves what He has made. If He did not, the world would at once fall into ruin. For what the apostle says of men is true of all created things: “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) He who made “the heaven and the earth and all things that are therein, preserves them all.” (Neh. 9:6) His tender mercies are over all His works, (Ps. 145:9) from the largest of the fixed stars of the universe down to the birds of the air and the grass of the field. (Matt. 6:26, 28, 29)

God’s Care for Man

While God preserves and watches over all His works, He exercises special Providential care over man. He is not far from every one of us. (Acts 17:27) When God created man He promised to supply his wants. (Gen. 1:29) And He has done so ever since that time. The farmer sows the grain, but God makes it grow. The eyes of all wait upon Him, and He gives them their meat

in due season. It is He who opens His liberal hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing. (Ps. 145:15,16)

God's Particular Care for the Godly.

The care which God exercises over men in general, He bestows in special measure upon the godly. "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him; upon them that hope in His mercy: to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." (Ps. 33:18,19) Believers are told, therefore, to cast all their care upon Him, because He careth for them. (1 Pet. 5:7) He who feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the lilies of the field will much more feed and clothe His children. (Matt. 6:26, 30) He, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falleth, (Matt. 10:29) watches much more closely over the believers, because they are of more value than many sparrows. (Matt. 10:31) So full and minute is His care and forethought for them, that even the very hairs upon their head are all numbered. (Matt. 9:30)

God Rules the World.

God reigns supreme over the universe which He has made. (Ps. 93:1-4; Ps. 97:1) He is Lord over all, (Rom. 10:12) the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. (1 Tim. 6:15) He rules over nations (Ps. 66:7) and individuals. (Job 14:5) While there are many things in His government which are not clear to us in this world, (1 Cor. 13:12) and His thoughts are not our thoughts nor our ways His ways, (Is. 55:8,9) He sees to it that "all things shall work together for good to them that love Him." (Rom. 8:28) He permits many things to happen which He does not desire. Thus He permits men to sin, if they Will, because they are responsible moral beings and not mere machines. But beyond the limits which He lays down no creature can go. (Job 5:12; Is. 8:9,10) He often, for His own wise purposes, permits the wicked to prosper and the godly to suffer. But He sets bounds to the suffering of His children. and permits only so much to come upon them as will conduce to their final good. (Is. 43:1,2; Heb. 12:11)

God blesses the undertakings of the godly. (Ps. 37:5) On the other hand He frequently hinders the purposes of evil men. He prevented Laban from injuring Jacob, (Gen. 31:24) and Balaam from cursing Israel. (Num. 22:12ff) And He frequently overrules men's action so as to bring good out of evil. Thus he made the selling of Joseph into slavery by his brethren the means of saving Jacob's family as well as the whole population of Egypt from death by famine," and the crucifixion of Jesus the means of redeeming the human race from destruction. (Acts 4:27,28)

3. How God Made Man In His Own Image. How Man Fell Into Sin And Became A Lost Being.

Man Made in God's Image

Man, who was the last, is also the highest and noblest of God's earthly creatures. (Ps. 8:5) He is so, because he "is made after the similitude of God" (Jas. 3:9) and "is the image and glory of God." (1 Cor. 11:7) For when God had done everything necessary to make the earth a fit and pleasant abode for man, and had made the inferior creatures, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gen. 1:26) It is this image or likeness of God which places man so far above the brute, and which makes the slaying of a human being a crime that is to be punished with death. (Gen. 9:6)

Man's Body

This image or likeness of God in which man was created was not a bodily one; for God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and has no body. On the physical side of his being, man is akin to the beasts. His body like theirs was made of the dust of the ground. (Gen. 2:7) Though it is a most marvelous piece of divine workmanship (Ps. 139:14) and is vastly superior to the bodies of the lower animals, it is only the tabernacle in which the soul dwells. (2 Cor 5:1) Yet the body also possesses a dignity of its own; for it is the handiwork of God, it was assumed by the Son of God when He became man, (John 1:14) and, in the case of the believer, it is the temple of the Holy Ghost in this world (1

Cor 6:19) and shall be transformed and glorified in the world to come. (1 Cor 15:42-44)

Man's Soul

Man's real self is his soul or spirit, (Matt. 16:26; Matt. 10:28) which God breathed into him at creation. (Gen. 2:7) It is this soul that was made in the image of God and was a likeness or reflection of Him. Man, being a creature, could not, of course, be made like God in all things. Only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the image of God in this full and complete sense. (Col. 1:15) He is "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person." (Heb. 1:3) But man was created in the image and after the likeness of God; that is, God gave to man in a limited and finite measure those faculties and powers which He Himself possesses in unlimited and infinite measure. For God created man with reason and understanding, with a free will, with power to do what was good, with immortality, with dominion over the other creatures, and especially with a clear knowledge of God, (Col. 3:10) perfect righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. 4:24) In his original state man was a perfect being, (Gen. 1:31; Ecc. 7:29) who enjoyed God's favor and blessing, (Gen. 1:28) and who was perfectly happy.

Man's Fall Into Sin

Man was placed by God in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it, (Gen. 2:15) and was given permission to eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:16,17) Of this tree he was forbidden to eat on pain of death. (Gen. 2:17) His obedience to God was now put to the test. He was not to do God's will by compulsion, but voluntarily. He was created with a free will and was now to choose between obedience and disobedience. Had he chosen to obey, all would have been well. But the devil, who is the source of all evil, (Gen. 3:4-6) came to Eve under the guise of a serpent (Gen. 3:1) and deceived her. He persuaded her to doubt God's threat of punishment, filled her soul with a longing to taste of the forbidden fruit, and prevailed on her to eat of it. (Gen. 3:4-6) Eve then gave some of the fruit to her husband; and Adam,

though not deceived as she had been, (1 Tim. 2:14) listened to the persuasions of his wife (Gen. 3:17) and ate also. (Gen. 3:6)

The Consequences of the Fall

By this sin man fell from his state of purity and happiness, was expelled from Eden, brought upon himself bodily and spiritual death, (Rom. 5:12) and became a lost being. (Luke 19:10) And since all men are descended from Adam, they all inherit from him the consequences of the Fall. (Rom. 5:19)

Bodily Death

God had said to Adam, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) And although Adam was permitted to reach the age of 980 years before he died, (Gen. 5:5) he became a dying creature from the moment when he disobeyed the command of God. Man’s body is now a mortal body, and shall return to the earth from which it was taken. (Gen. 3:19) It is appointed unto men once to die, (Heb. 9:27) though they know not when nor where, because they know not what shall be on the morrow. (Jas. 4:14) Their life is frail as a flower and fleeting as a shadow. (Job 14:1-2) If it is a long life, it reaches seventy or eighty years, and at its best it is full of labor and sorrow. (Ps. 90:10) The whole human race has inherited the curse which God pronounced upon Adam and Eve immediately after their transgression, (Gen. 3:16-19) together with all the ills, pain and disease that are inseparable from a mortal body. (Job 5:7)

Spiritual Death

But the most direful effects of the Fall are felt in man’s soul. He still has, indeed, reason and understanding; but they are by no means as strong as they were before the Fall. He still possesses dominion over the inferior creatures; but it is very much limited. He still has a free will in earthly matters and can decide for himself what he will do in things that Concern

this world; but he has lost his free will in spiritual matters and can no longer by his own power do anything but that which is evil. The imagination of his heart is evil from his youth. (Gen. 8:21) He has lost the knowledge of God and the righteousness and holiness which he originally possessed. (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24) And now all men are born with a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5) and an inherited inclination to evil. (Rom. 8:7) This corruptness of our nature is called original sin. It leads to actual sins as soon as men are old enough to act. (Ecc. 7:20) It grows into evil deeds as naturally and inevitably as the acorn grows into the oak. (Prov. 4:23) Separated by the Fall from God who is the source of all life, man is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) and doomed to eternal destruction, (Matt. 25:41) until he is born again by the grace of God (John 3:5,6) and is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. 4:24) And even then the old sinful nature remains as a law in the flesh that wars against the law of the spirit, (Rom. 7:21-23) — a law which must be fought against and overcome more and more in this world, (Rom 8:12,13) but which will never completely disappear till we are transformed and glorified in the world to come. (1 Cor. 15:48-49)

4. The Justice Of God Must Demand Man's Condemnation.

God's Will is the Law

God's will is the Law for all His creatures; for He is King and Lord (1 Tim 6:15) over all. Human life and development according to God's will would have meant perfection and unbroken happiness to the race.

How God Gave Men His Law

God wrote His law in man's heart (Rom. 2:18) at creation as part of the image of God. But this original knowledge of God's will became more and more obscured (Rom. 1:21) after the Fall into sin. Therefore at Mt. Sinai God gave men His law anew, (Exod. 20:1) written on two tables of stone. (Exod. 31:18) This law is known as the Moral Law or the Ten Commandments. It is also called the Decalogue.

The sum and substance of this law, as Christ Himself tells us, is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:37, 39)

How He Threatens Transgressors

God requires men to keep His law on pain of punishment. When He gave men the Ten Commandments, He said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." (Exod. 20:5) And elsewhere in the

Bible He says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them,” (Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26) “the wages of sin is death,” (Rom. 6:23) and “the soul that sinneth shall die.” (Ezek. 18:4, 20)

Man Has Broken God’s Law

Man is sinful and guilty in God’s sight. (1 John 3:4)

[1] He is a sinful being by birth; (Ps. 51:5) for he is born of sinful parents, (Job 14:4) and “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6) He is by nature a child of wrath. (Eph. 2:3) His mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to God’s law. (Rom. 8:7) His heart is a hard, stony, (Ezek. 36:26) and rebellious (Jer. 5:23) heart, lacking the fear and love of God, (Rom. 3:18) and filled with the love of self and the world. It is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. (Jer. 17:9) It is a foul fountain of sin and iniquity. (Matt. 15:19)

[2] He sins against God daily by thought, word and deed. He does many things which God has forbidden, and omits many things which God has commanded. His transgressions are innumerable. (Ps. 40:12) He often does wrong without even knowing it. Therefore the Psalmist prays, “Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.” (Ps. 19:12) As long as the fear and love of God are absent from man’s heart, everything that he does is sinful, (Rom. 8:8) because he does not act from the right motive. The only kind of actions that are pleasing to God are those that are done out of love to Him; for “love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13:10)¹

All Men are Guilty

All men are guilty, (1 John 5:19) — There is no difference (Rom. 3:22) between men with respect to God’s law. " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” (Eccl. 7:20) The only sinless Being who ever trod the earth since the Fall into sin is Jesus Christ our Lord. He “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” (1 Pet 2:22) All others are sinful in

heart and life. "They are all gone out of the way," and "there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Rom. 3:12) Some have gone out of the way farther than others, and have committed more flagrant sins. But "there is none righteous, no not one." (Rom. 3:10) The best man, as well as the worst, is a breaker of God's law and guilty in His sight. (Is. 64:6) The Pharisee, who thought himself holy and thanked God that he was not as other men are, was a sinner as well as the publican who stood near him. (Luke 18:9-14) The Jews, who boasted that they were the children of Abraham and had the law, were sinners as well as the Gentiles whom they despised. (Rom. 3:9) And "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

All Deserve Punishment

Being transgressors of God's law, men deserve to be punished. Punishment is the just and necessary outcome of sin. (Gal. 6:7) Earthly governments do and must punish offenders, (Rom. 13:3,4; 1 Pet. 2:13,14) if they would not be unjust to those citizens who keep the laws. Who would want to live under a government that permits the thief and the murderer to go unpunished? Just so the justice of God, who governs the universe, requires the punishment of men, because they have broken His laws. If He did not inflict that punishment, He would not only break His own word which says that He will punish, but also be unfair and unjust to those of His creatures who, like the good angels, keep all His laws. To make light of sin is, therefore, the part of a fool. (Prov. 14:9) Sin inevitably exposes men to the everlasting wrath of God." It will not be overlooked or excused by Him. (Eccl. 11:9) "For the Lord is righteous;" (Ps. 129:4) "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." (Ps. 89:14)

God Will Punish

Men may deceive themselves as to the consequences of their sins. (2 Pet. 3:3, 4) But "God is not mocked." (Gal. 6:7) His wrath will certainly come upon the children of disobedience. (Eph. 5:6) It may be delayed, but it will come at last. (2 Pet. 3:8-10)

In This World

God frequently punishes men in this world. He punishes them through the pains and sufferings which, though delayed, sooner or later come as a retribution upon those who break the laws of nature and of nature's God. (Jer. 17:10) Men cannot sin with impunity. Drunkards and licentious persons bring misery upon themselves and upon others, and shorten their own life by their sins. Children often are made to suffer in body, mind and property on account of the sins of their parents.

God punishes the criminals through the penalties which earthly governments inflict for crimes; for earthly governments are His ministers "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Rom. 13:4) And He often sends punishment in the form of special judgments, (1 Cor. 10:5) such as accidents, sickness, or reverses of one kind or another. Famine, pestilence, conflagrations and the like are frequently a punishment which God sends upon whole communities for their sins. The flood, (Gen. 6:8) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24) and of the Canaanite nations, (Deut. 9:4,5) the downfall of Nineveh and Babylon (Is. 13) and other ancient nations were a judgment of God upon sin. The fall of the Roman empire may be directly traced to its corruption and wickedness.²

In the Next World

Unless men repent and are forgiven for Christ's sake, God will punish them eternally in the world to come. They who continue in their sins and harden their hearts are "treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous vengeance of God." (Rom. 2:5) For there will come a time when God will "render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6) — a day of reckoning, when the wicked shall cry out in despair to the mountains, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16,17) Then shall the wicked be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 22:13) They shall have their part with the devil

and his angels in the lake that burns with fire; (Rev. 21:8) and the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever and ever. (Rev. 14:10, 11)

1. The prevalence of crime, drunkenness, impurity and divorce; the eager desire to get rich, the unlawful power of money, the corruption of politics, the selfishness and utter lack of consideration for others so often manifested in business life, the crushing of the individual on the stock exchange, the cruelty of competition; slyness, deceit, pride, inordinate self-esteem, revengefulness, malice, hatred and envy in people who are usually regarded as comparatively good; — all this, and much more which might be mentioned, illustrates the truthfulness of the Bible's description of the depravity of the natural heart and life.↵
2. We dare not, however, conclude when pain or suffering is brought upon anyone, that he is being punished. God also brings suffering upon the good for purposes of chastening. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." — Heb. 12:6.↵

5. The Love Of God Has Prepared A Way For Man's Salvation.

A judge dare not relax the law or refuse to pass sentence upon a criminal because that criminal happens to be his son. If he did, he would be an unjust judge and unfit for the position which he occupies. But while as a judge he necessarily pronounces condemnation upon his son, as a father his heart is filled with love, and he spares no efforts to help, rescue and save his boy from the sin and error of his way. It is so with God. As Law-giver and Judge He is obliged to pass the sentence of condemnation on man. But as our Father, whose heart is filled with love to us, He desires our salvation. And therefore we find that, while on the one hand God's justice demands man's punishment, on the other hand His love has prepared a way by which all men may be saved, if they will.

God Loves Man

God reveals His love to us in the earthly blessings which He bestows upon us. We deserve none at His hands, yet He daily showers His benefits upon us. (Ps. 68:19) For "every good gift and every perfect gift" which we enjoy in this world "is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning." (Jas. 1:17) "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." (Ps. 33:5)

But God reveals His love especially (1 John 4:9) in what He has done and is willing to do for man's soul. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) And "eye hath not seen nor

ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” (1 Cor 2:9)

God Loved Man From all Eternity

God’s love for man is an everlasting love. (Jer. 31:3) He loved us in Christ before the world began, (2 Tim. 1:9) and purposed from all eternity to save those that believe in Jesus. (Eph. 3:11) For God foresaw that the human beings Whom He intended to create would fall into sin. And therefore at the same time that He determined to create man He also determined to redeem him, (Eph. 1:4,5) so " that in the ages to come He might show forth the riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7)

God’s Love Met the Demands of His Justice

God is “righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works.” (Ps. 145:17) Therefore, much as He loved man, He could not and dared not forgive man’s sin without first making provision to satisfy the demands of His own justice. (Heb. 9:22) For His justice demanded man’s condemnation. If He would help and save man, He could not do it by being lenient and relaxing the law. For if He had done that, He would no longer be just, and man would have been encouraged in his wickedness. The only way to satisfy justice and the only way to make man a better creature was to execute the punishment in full. But this would have meant the eternal destruction of man. Therefore God determined that He Himself, in the person of His only Son, would suffer the punishment in man’s place. This loving purpose, formed from all eternity, was carried out when the fulness of time came. (John 3:17) For then “God sent forth His Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;” (Gal. 4:4, 5) and “made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

The Greatness of God’s Love

The gift of His only begotten Son for our salvation is the crowning proof of God's love. For in giving us His Son, God not only gave us the greatest gift which it was in His almighty power to bestow, but He gave that gift to men who were His enemies (Rom. 5:10) and who deserved His everlasting wrath. " Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) "But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Truly, "God is love." (1 John 4:8) God's Love Includes All Men — God desires the salvation of all men. He has " no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from His way and live." (Ez. 33:11) He gave His Son for the sins of the whole world, (John 1:29) and His gracious plan of salvation is meant for all men without exception. (Rom. 11:32) It is this fact which makes Christianity the world religion. For unlike heathen religions, it is not meant for one race, or for one age, or for one part of the earth's surface. And it includes all men of every class and description, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, respectable or disreputable. " God would have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;" (1 Tim. 2:4) and He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9) and live. Therefore God "now commands all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30) No matter how deeply they may have fallen into sin, God loves them all and is willing to save them all, if they will only repent and believe in Christ. If they believe in Him, then "though their sins be like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is. 1:18) For "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin," (1 John 1:7) and great as our sins may be, God's grace is greater. " Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound." (Rom. 5:20)

His Love Must be Accepted

If men would profit by the wonderful love of God, they must believe in Christ. (John 3:14,15) If they do not believe, they receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1; Heb. 12:15) Only those who are in Christ by faith (1 John 5:20) share in what he has done for men's salvation. Those who do not believe shall be lost. (Mark 16:16)

He Bears Long With the Impenitent.

God is gracious and long-suffering, (Ps. 86:15) slow to anger and of great mercy. (Ps. 103:8) He does not at once send upon men the punishment which they deserve, (Ps. 103:10) but withholds it, so that they may be led to repentance by His goodness. (Rom. 2:4) He spares no efforts to reclaim them from the error and destruction of their way. (Matt. 22:4, 5)

Those Who Despise God's Love are Lost

If men refuse to repent and believe in Christ, even the love of God, infinite as it is, can do no more for them. (Isa. 5:4,5) They are then irrecoverably lost. (Luke 19:41-44) The love of God has gone its utmost length in Christ. God cannot do more to save sinful man than He has already done in giving His Son. (1 John 4:9) If this love is despised and rejected, men remain under the wrath of God and are doomed to eternal destruction. (1 John 5:12) For "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3) Jesus Christ is "the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him." (John 14:6) "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

6. The Old Testament Prophecies Concerning The Saviour.

During the long centuries that preceded the birth of Christ, God prepared and sustained mankind by the promise, given to a faithful few, that the Saviour would certainly come into the world and take our life and flesh upon Him. And the godly men of Old Testament times looked forward with longing to the time when the Messiah should appear. (Luke 10:24)

The Seed of the Woman

Immediately after the Fall, even before He pronounced the sentence of condemnation on man, God promised that a descendant of that very Eve whom the devil had deceived into disobedience, would, at the cost of suffering to Himself, destroy the work of the devil. For God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:15)

The Seed of Abraham

When Abraham was chosen to be the ancestor of a special people of God, the Lord promised that he should also be the ancestor of the Saviour. For God said to Abraham, “In thee” and “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 26:4)

Of the Tribe of Judah

Among the sons of Jacob, who were to be the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, Judah was selected as the one from whom the Messiah or Saviour should be descended. The promise of God, given through Jacob on his death-bed, was: “The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (Gen. 49:10)

The Son of David

When David had become king over Israel, God gave him the promise, “I will set up thy seed after thee” (2 Sam. 7:12) and “I will establish the throne of thy kingdom forever.” (2 Sam. 7:13) The son of David was a name by which Jesus was frequently addressed. (Luke 18:38) And because He was the descendant of David, the Jews expected Him to set up an earthly kingdom like that of David. (John 6:15)

Prophet, Priest and King

According to the Old Testament prophecies, the promised Messiah would exercise a threefold office. He would be Prophet, Priest and King. He would be a Prophet and teach the people. For God said to Moses: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I command Him.” (Deut 18:18)

He would be a Priest. For in a Psalm which refers throughout to the coming Saviour we are told, that He should be “a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Ps. 110:4) The priesthood of the Old Testament and its sacrifices for the sins of the people, and especially the High-priesthood, were a type and shadow of Jesus, the great High-priest, and His all-sufficient sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world. (Heb. 9:11-14)

He would be a King. For the Psalmist said of Him: “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth;” “His

enemies shall lick the dust;” and “all kings shall fall down before Him.” (Ps. 72:8,9,11)

A Substitute for Us

The coming Saviour would be a substitute for men and bear the punishment of their sins in their place. The sacrifice of animals in Old Testament times was accepted as a *temporary* atonement. (Lev. 1:4) But as an animal cannot really take the place of a man, and “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” (Heb. 10:4) the sacrifice of those animals was meant to prefigure and point forward to Christ who would make the true and real sacrifice for sin. (Heb. 9:9) Thus the prophet Isaiah, looking forward into the future and beholding the sufferings and death of Jesus as if they had already taken place, said: “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53:5,6)

Events in His Life Foretold

Many of the events and circumstances in the Saviour’s life are accurately foretold in the Old Testament. He should be preceded by a forerunner to prepare His way. (Isa. 40:3) He would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14) at Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2) Gentiles should come and worship Him, and bring Him gold and incense. (Isa. 60:3,6) He would give light to those who walk in darkness and who dwell in the land of the shadow of death. (Isa. 9:2) He would have miraculous power, and open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, cause the lame to leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. (Isa. 35:5,6) The kings of the earth would set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against Him. (Ps. 2:2) He would ride into Jerusalem as a King, though in poor and lowly state. (Zech. 9:9) He would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. (Isa. 53:3) He would be betrayed by His own friend (Ps. 41:9) for thirty pieces of silver. (Zech. 11:12) He would be deserted by His disciples.

(Zech. 13:7) He would be counted with the malefactors. (Isa. 53:9, 12) He would die in great agony (Ps. 22:14,17) while the sun became darkened at noon-day. (Amos 8:9) He would pray for His enemies, though reviled by them. (Ps. 109:2-4) His bones should not be broken. (Ps. 34:20) He would be pierced with a spear. (Zech. 12:10) He would be buried with the rich. (Is. 53:9) He would rise again from the dead, (Ps. 16:10) ascend into heaven, (Ps. 68:18) and sit at the right hand of God. (Ps. 110:1)

7. God Sent His Only Son Into The World To Be Our Saviour.

When the fulness of time came, God sent the Saviour whom He had promised. (Gal. 4:4,5) That Saviour is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, (John 3:16) who became man, (John 1:4) and lived and suffered and died on earth, that He might redeem us from our sins. (1 Tim. 1:15)

Jesus, True Man

“Conceived by the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35) and born of the Virgin Mary,” (Luke 2:7) Jesus was in every respect a real human being such as we are; only, he was without sin. (1 Pet. 2:22) He had a human body (Heb. 2:14) and a human soul. (Matt. 26:38) He called Himself the Son of man, (Matt. 16:13) and thus indicated that He was true man, yet was distinct from other men by reason of His absolute perfection.

The whole history of His earthly life, as given by the evangelists, records a process of growth and development such as is common to men. He was born, (Luke 2:7) He grew to youth, (Luke 2:42) He increased in wisdom and stature, (Luke 2:52) and reached the age of manhood. He became hungry," thirsty (John 4:7) and weary. (John 4:6) He was tempted, (Matt. 4:1-11) He was moved with joy, (Luke 10:21) with sorrow (Matt. 26:38) and with indignation. (Matt. 21:12,13) He wept, (John 11:35) He prayed, (Matt. 26:39) He was maltreated, (Matt. 26:67) He suffered, (1 Pet 2:23) and He died. (Matt. 27:50) And these things He could not have done, if He had not been true man.

Jesus, True God

Though He was true man, Jesus was also true God. (Rom. 9:5) He is the only begotten Son (John 3:16) of the Father. At His baptism (Matt. 3:17) and at His transfiguration on the mount, (Matt. 17:5) a voice spoke from heaven, and said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Divine glory like that of God the Father belonged to Him before the foundation of the world. (John 17:5) He is "The Word" who was in the beginning with God and who was God. (John 1:1) Before Abraham was, He is. (John 8:58) "In Him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily." (Col. 2:9) He is equally God with the Father, and "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." (John 5:23) He and the Father are one. (John 10:30) He is in the Father and the Father in Him. (John 10:38) He who hath seen Him hath seen the Father. (John 14:9)

Jesus, the God-Man

Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. (Rom. 1:3,4) He is God Incarnate, or God become man. For "The Word," that is, the Son of God, "became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) He is still God and man even now, when He sits at the right hand of God the Father; and He will remain God and man to all eternity. (Heb. 7:24)

Why the Son of God Became Man

This incarnation of the Son of God, or the permanent union of God and man in Jesus Christ, is the greatest miracle of all time. It is a mystery which we cannot understand. But on it our salvation depends. It was necessary that the Son of God should become man in order to save us. (1 Tim. 1:15)

If Jesus had not been both God and man, He could not have become our Saviour. For if He had been God only, He could not have put himself in our place under the law of God, nor have suffered and died for our sins. If He had been man only, then, no matter how perfect and holy He might have been, he could not have saved anyone but Himself. But as God and man in one person, He could and did do all that was necessary for our salvation. (Rom. 5:18,19; Heb. 9:28) As a man He perfectly fulfilled the law for us and died for our sins upon the cross. And that which He thus did and

suffered for us has infinite worth and power to save, because He is God and man in one person.

Jesus Humbled Himself

When the Son of God became man, He did not lose any of His divine power and majesty. He was still almighty. (John 5:18, 21, 22) He was “the Lord” of the angels even when He lay as a helpless Infant in the manger at Bethlehem.” All power which belonged to Him as God belonged to him also as the God-man, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 1:3)

But while He lived on earth as a man among men, Jesus did not use all the power which belonged to Him. He did indeed give men glimpses of His divine majesty in His holy life and in the miracles which He performed. But ordinarily His majesty was veiled. He ate and drank and slept like other men. He was as the lowliest among them. For He was born in poverty, with no room for Him in the inn; (Luke 2:7) and He was raised in Nazareth, an obscure village of Galilee. (Matt. 2:23) In His manhood’s days He had no place to lay His head. (Matt. 8:20) In order to pay His taxes on one occasion, he had to send one of His disciples to get the necessary money from the mouth of a fish. (Matt. 17:27) And although He could have summoned to His aid more than twelve legions of angels. (Matt. 23:53) He permitted Himself to be seized by His enemies, (Matt. 26:57) maltreated and put to death, (Matt. 27) as though He possessed no more power than any other man.

As the God-man, Jesus might have appeared among men in the full splendor of divine glory. But in order to redeem us, it was necessary that He should suffer and die. (Luke 24:46, 47) Therefore as a man, Jesus “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:8) Only after His resurrection and ascension did He exercise the full divine power and sovereignty which had belonged to Him all along.

The Names of Jesus

Various names applied to Jesus in the Scriptures are full of significance, and throw light upon His person and work. The name *Emmanuel*, applied to Him in the Old (Isa. 7:14) and quoted in the New Testament, (Matt. 1:23) means “God with us,” and points to the union of God and man in Him. The name *Jesus*, given to Him by the angel, was His personal name, and signifies “He shall save.” (Matt. 1:21) The New Testament name *Christ* and the Old Testament name *Messiah* are His official title, and both denote the one who is “Anointed” by God for the work of redemption. He is called the *Mediator* (1 Tim. 2:5) between God and man, because by His sufferings and death He has mediated and made peace between God and us. He is called our *Advocate*, (1 John 2:1) because He pleads for us with the Father. (Rom. 8:34) He is called our *Great High Priest*, (Heb. 4:14) because He has once for all offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, (Heb. 9:25, 26) and thus made atonement for our sins.

8. The Miracles Of Jesus.

The land of Palestine rang from end to end with the fame of Christ's miracles. (Matt. 4:24; Luke 4:37) The people were filled with wonder and astonishment by His mighty deeds. (Luke 4:36; Mark 7:37) No man in all the world's history had displayed such marvelous power. The forces of nature, devils, life and death lay in subjection at His feet. The prophets of Old Testament times had performed some miracles. But they had done so only at rare intervals, and never by virtue of any power inherent in themselves. They prayed to God to do the miracles for them. But Jesus did His miracles by His own power. (Luke 7:14) They were His kingly acts, visible manifestations of His divine glory.

His Mighty Works

Jesus performed many miracles. (John 11:47) Some of them are recorded in the Gospels. But many others which He performed are not recorded. (John 20:30) They were so numerous that the evangelists did not undertake to describe them all. His first miracle was the turning of water into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana of Galilee. (John 2:1-11) After that, scarcely a day passed during His public ministry on which He did not perform some miracle, and often great numbers of them. Men came to Him for miraculous healing till far into the night. (Luke 4:40) He healed the sick, (Matt. 4:23) the lame, (John 5:1-16) the blind, (John 9:1-7) the deaf, (Mark 7:31-37) the leprous; (Luke 17:11-19) cast out devils; (Matt. 8:28-34) caused His disciples to make unprecedented draughts of fishes; (Luke 5:1-11; John 21:6) stilled the tempest by a word; (Matt. 8:23-27) fed the multitudes With a few loaves and fishes, (Matt. 14:15-21) raised dead persons to life; (John 11:43,44) and rose from the dead Himself on the third day. (Mark 16:1-8)

Real Miracles

The reality of Christ's miracles is firmly established by the testimony of His enemies. They hated Him bitterly and were greatly alarmed by the number of people whom His miracles led to believe in Him. (John 11:47-48) If they could have thrown any doubt upon the reality of His miracles and thus counteracted their effect, they unquestionably would have made haste to do so. They sought to attain this end by ascribing His mighty deeds to the power of the devil. (Matt. 12:24) And when they failed of their purpose in this way, they determined to put Him to death and thus effectually prevent Him from performing any more miracles. (John 11:50) But that His deeds were real miracles, they never once questioned. On the contrary, they freely acknowledged it even when He hung upon the cross; for they sought to embitter His last hours by saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." (Matt. 27:42)

What the Miracles Were

The miracles were an unusual operation of the laws of nature. Those laws are God's ordinary way or mode of accomplishing His purposes. They are an expression of His will. But when He sees fit, He can give expression to His will in some other way. In performing His miracles, Jesus showed that, as God and the author of the laws of the world, He is not the slave of those laws but their master. He accomplished results which startled the people and filled them with amazement, (Mark 7:37) not by breaking the laws of nature, but by directing the operation of the latter in an extraordinary way and through the higher law of His own will.

We ourselves modify the law of gravitation whenever we raise a weight from the ground. We do not abolish or break the law by so doing. The law still exists. But in that particular case its operation is modified by the human will. The more we learn of nature's laws, the more able we become to control them for our own use and to make them our obedient servants. And if we can in some measure control them, Jesus, who is the Son of God, and who not only understands those laws thoroughly but is their author, could do so at will.

Why Jesus Performed Miracles

Ordinarily God does not modify the regular operation of the laws of nature. But when the Son of God came into the world as an unknown and humble person, miracles were needed, so that men might know who He was, and that underneath the veil of His humanity they might discover His divinity. Through the miracles He manifested forth His glory and brought men to faith in Him. (John 2:11) He established His power in the only way possible then. That way is not needed now, because His divinity is abundantly proved. Even when He was on earth Jesus never performed miracles without a special purpose. He never did them simply to display His powers. He refused to be considered a mere wonder-worker. (Matt. 12:39)

The miracles of Jesus always had a moral and helpful meaning for the soul. They expressed the good will and saving power of God to men. He did them in order to strengthen, release or save men's soul. He showed by them that the terrible laws of fate and necessity which seemed to run the world, which appeared resistless, and which make man a mere speck in the immensity of things, can be overcome by the love and power of God. He to whom we pray as our Lord, still has the same power which he exercised in His miracles; and He employs it to control all things so that they "work together for good to them that love Him." (Rom 8:28)

What the Miracles Proved

The miracles of Jesus proved that He was the Messiah and Son of God. When John the Baptist sent messengers to Him to inquire, "Art thou He that should come or do we look for another?" the answer of Jesus was, "Go and tell John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." (Matt. 11:3-5) The Old Testament had foretold that when the Messiah came He would do such works; (Isa. 35:4-6) and the miracles proved that Jesus was He.

The miracles were extraordinary works which proved the extraordinary claim of Jesus, that He was the Son of God.

They bore witness of Him that the Father sent Him. (John 5:36) If men were unwilling to believe His words, they were to believe His works. (John 10:37,38) And if they refused to believe on Him after seeing His mighty miracles, they were guilty of the greatest sin, (John 15:24) and would fare worse on the day of judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah. (Matt. 10:15; 11:23,24)

Many Believed

The very first. miracle of Jesus produced faith in the hearts of His disciples. Men were convinced that it required far more than human power to do such works. (Matt. 8:27) And after He raised Lazarus from the dead, the number of those who believed was so large, that His enemies became alarmed and planned to put Him to death, lest, if they let Him alone, all men would be led to faith through His miracles. (John 11:47-50)

9. The Teaching Of Jesus.

It was part of the Messiah's office as a prophet to teach men. Therefore wherever He went, in Judea, Galilee or Samaria, Jesus taught the people. We find Him teaching in the temple, (Luke 20:1) in the synagogues, (Luke 4:16,21) on the mountain, (Matt. 5:1,2) the sea-side, (Matt. 13:2) or resting by Jacob's well. (John 4:5-26) Sometimes His pupils consisted of great multitudes; (Matt. 5:1,2) sometimes of only a few disciples, (Matt. 13:10) and occasionally of only one person, like Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) or the woman of Samaria. (John 4:5-26)

Jesus the Great Teacher

In former times God had spoken to men through the prophets, but now He spoke to them by his Son. (Heb. 1:1,2) Coming from the bosom of the Father, (John 1:18) Jesus could reveal God's will as no one else could. And He taught with such evident power and authority, that the people were filled with the utmost astonishment, (Matt. 7:28,29) and were convinced that He was a teacher come from God. (John 3:2) The teaching of Jesus was the absolute (Luke 21:33) and final truth. It is the climax of God's revelation to men. (Heb. 2:2,3) He told them all that they need to know or will know of God in this world. Even when the Holy Spirit came, whom Jesus sent to guide the disciples into all truth, (John 10:13) He simply built on the foundation which Christ had laid, bringing all things which Christ had spoken to their remembrance and making His words clear to them. (John 14:26)

What He Taught

[1] Jesus taught the law of God, and made plain its real meaning. This He did especially in His Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5-7) He freed the Law from the human traditions (Matt. 5:43,44) with which the scribes and Pharisees had encumbered it, and showed that it must be fulfilled not only outwardly by deeds, but inwardly in the heart by perfect love to God and man. (Matt. 22:37,39)

[2] But His special work as a teacher was to proclaim the Gospel — the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God which He Himself was now bringing to men. (Luke 4:21) His proclamation may be regarded under two heads: namely, what He taught concerning Himself; and what He taught concerning the Kingdom of God or of Heaven.

Concerning Himself

Jesus taught, that He is the Son of God who came down from heaven so that men might have eternal life in Him. (John 3:13-17) He would save them by giving His life as a ransom for them. (Matt. 20:28) He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life;” (John 14:6) and no one can know God (Matt. 11:27) or come to the Father except through Him. Repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in His name among all nations. (Luke 24:47) In order to be saved, men must believe on Him. (John 3:16) Whoever does not believe will be condemned. (John 3:17)

He is not only the Saviour of men but also their Judge. (John 5:22) And He will one day come again to judge and reward them according to their works. (Matt. 16:27)

Concerning the Kingdom of God

Jesus taught, that with His coming that kingdom was at hand. (Matt. 4:17) It is not a kingdom of this world, (John 18:36) outward and visible, but a kingdom in the human heart. (Luke 17:20,21) He is its King. (John 18:37) Repentance is necessary on the part of all who would become members of it. (Matt. 4:17) Those who would belong to it must be humble, and the humblest in it are the greatest. (Matt. 18:4) They must be obedient, and not only say “Lord, Lord,” but do the will of His Father in heaven. (Matt. 7:21) He and His subjects are most intimately united like the branch and the vine.

(John 15:5,6) He not only rules over them, but loves them: they are His friends. (John 15:15)

His Parables

Jesus frequently made use of parables, in order to make His teaching plain. This He did especially in describing the Kingdom of God. By means of illustrations drawn from daily life, He shows how that kingdom will grow externally (Matt. 13:31,32) and internally (Matt. 13:33) till it extends over the whole world, and exerts a sacred influence over the whole race; how anxiously God desires that men should belong to it; (Luke 15:3-32) how foolishly some despise its offers of grace; (Matt. 22:2-14) how its subjects are gathered into it; (Matt. 13:47-50) and how in it the good and the bad are found side by side in this world. (Matt. 13:24-30)

He also shows how its subjects must, like a tree, bear fruit or be destroyed; (Luke 13:6-9) how they must forgive others in order to retain the forgiveness of God themselves," and how they should show mercy to the needy. (Matt. 18:23-35) He warns them not to set their heart on the things of this world; (Luke 12:16-21) urges them to be faithful in serving Him; (Matt. 25:14-30) and bids them look for a reward of grace and not of merit. (Matt. 20:1-16) He shows them how the godly and the ungodly respectively fare in the next world; (Luke 16:19-31) warns them of the suddenness with which He will come to judge the world; (Matt. 24:43) and bids them watch and be always ready, because they "know not the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 25:13)

His Moral Precepts

Jesus intends that men shall be saved only by faith in Him. But at the same time, the character and conduct of those who believe in Him is to bear witness to their faith. They are to let their light shine before men. (Matt. 5:16) To this end He has given many precepts, showing what kind of people his followers should be in heart and life. They should aim at a far higher standard of moral excellence than other men. (Matt. 5:48) They are to love God above all things and their neighbor as themselves. (Matt. 22:37,39)

In his dealings with his fellow-men, the Christian is to follow the Golden Rule of doing to others as he would have others do to him. (Matt. 7:12) He should be uniformly kind in his treatment of them, be wholly free from ill-will or animosity against any one, and never be guilty of unkind words. (Matt. 5:21,22) If he has wronged any one, he should be ready to acknowledge his fault and make amends. (Matt. 5:23-26) If others have offended or injured him, he must be ready to forgive. (Matt. 6:14,15) He must not take revenge, but return good for evil, and love even his enemies. (Matt. 5:38-47) He should be kind and charitable in his judgment and opinion of other people; he should not pick out their faults and hold them up to view, but be concerned to overcome his own. (Matt. 7:1-5)

He should be pure and chaste in mind and heart as well as in deed. (Matt. 5:27,28) He should be careful in his speech, so as not only to avoid profanity but also all useless and idle words. (Matt. 5:33-37) He should be ready to help every one that is in distress, (Matt. 5:42) but when he has done so, he should not boast or make a show of it. (Matt. 6:1-4) His religious life is to be sincere and earnest, (Matt. 7:13,21) but quiet and unostentatious, (Matt. 6:5-18) free from unbelieving care and worry, and trustful of God's Fatherly care. (Matt. 6:25-34) And he should resolutely cut loose from everything that hinders him from securing his own salvation or performing God's Will. (Matt. 5:29,30)

10. The Holy Life Of Jesus.

In the midst of a world of sinful men, Jesus lived a sinless and holy life. He is the only human being who ever fulfilled God's law perfectly by loving God above all things and His neighbor as Himself.

The Holiness of Jesus

Having God alone for His Father, (Luke 1:35) Jesus was free from that inborn sinfulness and depravity of the heart which all other men inherit in consequence of the Fall (Rom. 5:19; John 3:6) into sin. And during His entire life He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." (1 Pet 2:22) He was "the Holy and Just" One. (Acts 3:14) He was holy as God Himself is holy; for He was "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person." (Heb. 1:3) He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," (Heb. 7:26) and was "without blemish or spot." (1 Pet 1:19)

Tempted, Yet Without Sin

Being true man, it was possible for Jesus to be tempted. (Matt. 4:1) And He was "in all points tempted like as we are." Yet He remained without sin. (Heb. 4:15) He never yielded to temptation, no matter how strong or cunning or long-continued were Satan's assaults. (Matt. 4:3-10; Luke 4:2) His bitterest enemies could not point out a single sin in Him, (John 8:46) though they would have been only too glad to do so if they could. He taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our sins." (Luke 11:4) But, although He Himself often prayed, He never asked for the forgiveness of His own sins. He had none to be forgiven. And when He died, it was for our sins, (1 Pet. 2:24) and not for any which He Himself had committed. (John 18:38)

Jesus Perfectly Fulfilled God's Law

1. Toward God

Jesus loved God with all His heart and With all His soul and with all His mind. At twelve years of age; He was found in the temple “about His Father’s business.” (Luke 2:49) And throughout His whole life He sought to do “not His own will, but the will of His Father who sent Him.” (John 5:30) So completely did He do that will, that at the end of His days He could say to His Father, “I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” (John 17:4) He preferred to worship and serve God in lowliness and humility, rather than receive " the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." (Matt. 4:8-10) Though the path in which God’s will led Him was one of intensest suffering, He cheerfully walked in it, (Luke 18:31) and “was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:8)

2. Toward Man

Jesus loved men with a perfect love. This is manifest from what He did and suffered for them. He came among them “not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:28)

He was moved with pity for men’s bodily needs and diseases. He never refused to help them, even if they came to Him when He was weary with a long day’s work. (Luke 4:40) The very sight of suffering or need appealed to Him for help. He frequently helped men without being directly besought to do so (John 5:5-9; Luke 7:11-15) And He did not refrain from helping them, even when He knew that His act of kindness would be misconstrued by His enemies. (Matt. 12:10-13)

He was moved with compassion especially for men’s souls. He pitied “the multitudes, because they were as sheep without a shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36) And He willingly endured the greatest sufferings and died the shameful death of the cross, in order that He might redeem them from their sinful and lost condition. (Tit. 2:14)

His love included the whole human race; for He died for all and commanded His Gospel to be preached to all. (Mark 16:15) It included the lowest, the most despised, and the outcast among men; for He received the publicans and sinners, and ate with them. (Luke 15:1,2) He loved even His bitterest enemies; for He not only never took revenge upon them, but prayed for them while they nailed Him to the cross. (Luke 23:34)

What His Holy Life Proves

No mere man could have lived the holy life of Jesus, any more than a mere man could have performed His miracles. For since the Fall into sin all other men have been born with a sinful heart and a natural inclination to evil. (Rom. 8:7) The best men among the heathen sink infinitely below the holiness of Jesus. The prophets of Old Testament times, though they led comparatively holy lives, had their faults and shortcomings. And the best of Christians, though they derive strength from Christ Himself to lead new lives of holiness, (Gal. 2:20) are very far removed from His perfection. (Rom. 7:21-24) He alone was absolutely without sin. And His holiness proves that He is what He claimed to be, the Son of God.

An Example for Us

In leading a life of perfect love to God and man, Jesus has “left us an example that we should follow His steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21) He Himself kept the commandments which He gave us, and thus showed us how we ought to keep them. (1 Pet 1:15) We are to take His “yoke upon us and learn” of Him. (Matt. 11:29) If we abide in Him, we are “to walk even as He walked” (1 John 2:6) and love one another even as He loved us. (John 13:34)

He Fulfilled the Law for Us

The chief significance of Christ’s holy life lies in the fact, that by it He perfectly obeyed the law of God for us. (Rom. 5:18-19) The fulfillment of that law entitles the one who fulfills it to receive a reward. (Rom. 4:4) Jesus

did not need that reward for Himself, because He is the Son of God and from eternity possesses all glory. (John 17:5) We need it, but cannot earn it. (Rom. 3:20) Therefore Jesus placed Himself under the law (Gal. 4:4,5) and won the reward for us. We need not only to have our sins taken away, but also to obtain a righteousness that will fit us for heaven. By his complete and perfect obedience to God's law Jesus has acquired that righteousness. And He bestows it upon all who believe on Him. (Rom. 3:22) As by Adam's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of Christ many are made righteous. (Rom. 5:19) For Christ is "made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:30)

11. The Significance Of Christ's Sufferings And Death.

Jesus suffered and died in order that He might bear the punishment and make amends for the sins of the Whole world. (1 Cor 15:3)

Sin Must Be Atoned For

We all know in our best selves, that when an injury or a wrong has been done, the offender cannot expect to have things made right again until he has made restitution for the injury and suffered punishment for the wrong. Without such a demand for restitution and punishment, all fairness and justice in men's dealings with one another would die away. If this is a fact even in men's relations with one another, how much more must it be a fact in the dealings of a holy, just and impartial God with men. The human heart has always felt that sin demands punishment and cannot be forgiven until an expiation or atonement has been made. This conviction is confirmed by the Scriptures. For without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. (Heb. 9:22)

In the Old Testament God tried to educate Israel up to the deep conviction of the necessity of such restitution, punishment and expiation, by commanding them to make sin offerings, (Exod. 29:36-38) and especially a yearly atonement by the high priest. (Lev. 16:11-15) These offerings of the Israelites were not sufficient to make atonement for men's sins. (Heb. 10:4) They were only figurative, and pointed forward to the real expiation which would be made by Christ the Saviour. (Heb. 9:23; Heb. 10:1) But they were accepted by God meanwhile, (Rom. 3:25) in view of the atonement which Christ would make. (Heb. 9:9-12) He is the Great High Priest, (Heb. 4:14) and the real sacrifice for sin. (Heb. 9:24-26)

What Jesus Suffered

The sufferings of Jesus for us extended over the entire period of His earthly life. He endured all the trials and hardships which are common to men. In addition to that, He suffered the constant persecution of His enemies. (Heb. 12:3) And as a holy and perfect being, He necessarily experienced the greatest mental and spiritual anguish from His contact and identification with a sinful and guilty world. But the climax of His sufferings was reached at the end of His life, in His agony in the garden 'of Gethsemane, (Matt. 26:36-44) His seizure by His enemies, (Matt. 26:47-56) His trial, maltreatment and condemnation by the Jewish council and Roman governor, (Matt. 26:25 - 27:30) and His shameful death upon the cross. (Matt. 27:31-50)

Jesus Suffered and Died Voluntarily

The death of Jesus was not an unforeseen accident which spoiled all His plans. It was the very object for which He had come into the world. (Matt. 20:28) It took place in accordance with God's eternal purpose (1 Pet. 1:19-20) and with Christ's own foreknowledge. He told His disciples of His approaching sufferings, and voluntarily went forward to endure them. (Luke 18:31-33) No man could take His life from Him. He laid it down of Himself. (John 10:18) The multitudes who came out by night to seize Him could not have done so if He had been unwilling. (John 18:6; Matt. 20:53,54) But He permitted them to capture Him and lead Him away to trial and death, in order that He might suffer all that we deserved by our sins. (Luke 24:46)

Why Jesus Suffered and Died

The death of Jesus was not intended simply to show us how much God loves us, or how much He hates sin. It was not meant to be merely an example of the patience which we should exercise in suffering, or to show us how nobly and gloriously a man may and should meet even an unjust death. It does do these things. (John 3:16; Heb. 12:2) But it does much

more. Its chief significance lies in the fact that it was an atonement for our sins. (Rom. 4:25) He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our guilt, and thus satisfied the demands of God's justice. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. 53:5) He put Himself in our place, and endured the punishment which we deserved. (Rom. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:21) His sufferings were vicarious. (1 Pet. 3:18)

His Death was Sufficient for All

The death of Jesus is full atonement for the sins (1 John 1:7) of the whole world. (1 John 2:2) His sufferings and death are the equal of the sufferings and death of all. He not only suffered in our place, (1 Pet. 3:18) but He suffered all that we deserved. (1 Pet. 2:24)

We cannot fully realize the extremity of Christ's sufferings. We see something of their greatness, however, when we behold Him in the garden of Gethsemane wrestling with God in prayer till the sweat rolled from His brow like great drops of blood; (Luke 22:44) when we listen to His prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;" (Matt. 26:39) and when we hear His agonized cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) The whole burden of the world's guilt and of God's wrath against the world's sin lay upon Jesus. And the burden was so great, that even He, supported as He was by all the strength which belonged to Him as the God-man, could scarcely endure it. (Matt. 26:38) An eternity of human woe and torment was compressed within the limits of His sufferings and death.

Therefore His death is a full and complete atonement for our sins. (Tit. 2:14) He "has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13) By "His own blood He has obtained eternal redemption for us," (Heb. 9:12) having once for all put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9:26)

God Reconciled

As the result of the sufferings and death of Christ, God is reconciled to man. For “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (2 Cor. 5:19) The needs of justice are now fully satisfied, and God is free to forgive sins (Col. 1:14) for Christ’s sake without ceasing to be a just and holy God. (Rom. 3:26) Indeed, now that all the requirements of the law have been met by Christ, God’s justice itself unites with His love in bestowing forgiveness upon the believer. (1 John 1:9) All men may, if they will, find forgiveness of sins through Christ. (Luke 24:47) For God “has made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself” (Col. 1:20)

The Atonement Made Ours by Faith

In order to profit by what Christ has done, we must accept it by faith. (John 3:14,15) God does not force salvation upon the unwilling. But if men believe in Christ, then God regards and treats them as if they themselves had done all that Christ has done for them. He imputes Christ’s righteousness to them. (Rom. 4:22-25) They are justified, that is, counted righteous for Christ’s sake. (Rom. 4:5) For “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Rom. 5:1) and “shall be saved from wrath through Him.” (Rom. 5:9)

12. The Bible Teaching Of The Resurrection Of Jesus.

The Saviour always had taught that He was the Resurrection and the Life. (John 11:25) As the Son of God who is alive forevermore and is the same yesterday, today and forever, and as the Prince of Life who raised others from the dead, Jesus could not remain in the grave. In accordance with the Old Testament prophecies (Ps. 16:10) and with his own predictions, (Matt. 16:21) He rose from the dead on the third day. He “had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again.” (John 10:18)

A Real Return From Death to Life

As the death of Jesus was not a seeming but an actual death (Luke 23:46; John 19:33) like that of any other man who dies, so His resurrection was a real return from death to life. He reappeared to His disciples, not as a spirit, but with the same body which had been put to death on the cross. His body could be touched and felt, and had flesh and bones just as any other body has. (Luke 24:37-39) It showed plainly the marks made by the nails in His hands and feet. (John 20:25-27) But it possessed new properties and powers. It was no longer subject to the same limitations as our body now is. Jesus could appear and disappear at will, (Luke 24:15, 31) and could pass through closed doors. (John 20:19) His body was a transformed and glorified body, (1 Cor 15:41-45) such as ours also shall be after our resurrection. (Phil. 3:21)

The Resurrection a Fact

The disciples had been so disheartened by the crucifixion, that they had practically lost faith in Jesus as the Messiah, (Luke 24:21) and had forgotten His promise to rise again from the dead. They never for a moment thought of deceiving the people, as the Pharisees thought they might, by stealing the body of Jesus and then telling the people that He had risen. (Matt. 27:63,64) But if they had thought of it, they could not have done so, because the chief priests and Pharisees sealed His sepulchre, and set a guard of soldiers before it. (Matt. 27:66)

The resurrection of Jesus is a fact. The strongest proof of this fact is, that the disciples themselves were so skeptical about it, and so set in their notion of its impossibility, that they never would have believed it, if they had not been obliged to do so by the evidence of their own eyes. They demanded the strongest and most abundant proofs before they were willing to believe. "Then they first were told that Jesus had risen, the words of those who brought the news" seemed to them idle tales, and they believed them not." (Luke 24:11) Thomas, one of the twelve, even went so far as to declare, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." But when Jesus showed Him his hands and His side, even Thomas was convinced and cried out, "My Lord and my God." (John 20:25-28)

Jesus Appeared Often to His Disciples

Jesus tarried on the earth forty days after He rose from the dead. And during this time He gave His disciples so many and such plain proofs (Acts 1:3) of His resurrection, that, slow as they were to believe, (Luke 24:25) their doubts were all removed. The women who went to His grave on Easter morning found it empty, and were told by the angel, "He is risen, He is not here." (Mark 16:6) Mary saw Him in the garden, and mistook Him for the gardener until He called her by name. (John 20:14-16) He was seen by Peter, (Luke 24:34) by the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, (Luke 24:15) and twice by the apostles as they were gathered together. (John 20:19-29) He appeared to several of His disciples as they were fishing on the sea of Tiberias. (John 21:1) He was seen by more than five hundred disciples at once. (1 Cor 15:6) After that He was seen by James, and then by all the apostles. (1 Cor. 15:7) He was accompanied by the disciples out to

Mount Olivet, where He ascended into heaven before their eyes. (Acts 1:9,12) And after His ascension He was seen also by Paul. (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:3-5; Acts 22:17-18)

A Great Change in the Apostles

These appearances of our Lord made the disciples so certain of His resurrection that a great change took place in them all. Instead of being discouraged and dismayed as they had been before, the twelve now became filled with joyful confidence, and, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, (Acts 2:1-4) went forth everywhere preaching the Gospel of the crucified and risen Saviour. (Mark 16:20) And Paul, who had been a bitter persecutor of the Christians, became a preacher of the Gospel (Acts 9:20) and underwent the greatest labors, trials and sufferings for Christ's sake. (2 Cor. 11:23-28) Nothing but the unalterable conviction that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and now reigns in heaven can account for so marvelous a transformation.

The Importance of the Resurrection

When the apostles chose a man to take the place of Judas Iscariot among them, they were careful to select one who had been a witness of the resurrection. (Acts 1:22) And when they went forth to proclaim the Gospel, they based their preaching on the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. (Acts 2:22-24) Without the resurrection, they could not have persuaded men to believe on Jesus. For if He had not risen, He would have been simply a man, even though a holy man who had been unjustly put to death. But His resurrection proves that He is the Son of God. (John 20:28; Acts 2:36) No mere man ever did or could rise from the dead and ascend into heaven as Jesus did. God would not have raised up from the dead one who said He was the Son of God, if He had not been what He claimed. The voice from heaven at His baptism had declared and His miracles, teaching and holy life had shown that He was the Son of God. And now the resurrection confirmed and sealed all that had been said and done. Jesus could die as other men die; but He could not as God's "Holy One see corruption." (Acts

2:24-31) On the contrary, He “was declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:4)

A Proof of Christ’s Atonement

The resurrection proves that the sacrifice which Jesus made for us on the cross satisfied in full the demands of God’s justice. He suffered all that we deserved by our sins. (1 Cor. 15:3) And the resurrection is God’s testimony that He has done so. If His sacrifice had not been sufficient, Jesus would have remained in the power of death. But He arose from the dead, and thus proved that His atonement is complete and our ransom fully paid. (Rom. 8:34; 1 Thess. 1:10) “He was delivered for our offenses, and rose again for our justification.” (Rom. 4:25) He has conquered sin and death and hell for us, and has “brought life and immortality to light.” (2 Tim. 1:10)

A Proof of Our Resurrection

As surely as Christ rose from the dead, (1 Cor. 15:12,13; 1 Thess. 4:14) so surely will there be also a resurrection of all the dead. (1 Cor. 15:20) “God who raised up Jesus from the dead will also raise up us.” (1 Cor. 6:14) The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of Jesus “and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28,29)

Through the resurrection of Jesus, death has lost its terrors for the believers. (1 Cor. 15:55-57) It is for them only a sleep (Thess. 4:13, 14) from which they shall one day awake at His word. Then He will change their “vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:21)

13. The Significance Of Christ's Ascension Into Heaven. His Sitting At The Right Hand Of The Father.

Jesus remained on the earth forty days after His resurrection, in order to give His disciples “infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3) that He was risen. Then He Went with them to Mount Olivet, (Acts 1:12) and, while they beheld, (Acts 1:9) “He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.” (Mark 16:19)

##Christ Exalted

Jesus had “humbled Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” (Phil. 2:8) in order that by so doing He might redeem men from destruction. Therefore “God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11) The work which Jesus had come into the world to do was completed. (John 17:4) And now He returned to that heaven from which He had come, and occupied the place which belonged to Him as the Son of God. (John 17:5) The necessity for His humiliation being past, His exaltation took place.

Exalted as Man

As God, Jesus is unchangeable, “the same yesterday, today and forever,” (Heb. 13:8) and could neither be humiliated nor exalted. But as man He had

humbled Himself and refrained from the full use of the power which belonged to Him. As man therefore He was now exalted. He Himself told His disciples immediately before His ascension, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18) And He ascended into heaven to exercise that power.

At the Right Hand of God

Jesus now sits at the right hand of God, (Mark 16:19) that is to say, at the right hand of God's power. For God is a Spirit, (John 4:24) and therefore has neither a right nor a left hand. But since man's chief strength usually lies in his right hand or arm, we speak of God's power as His right hand.

As the Son of God, Christ sat on the right hand of God from all eternity. (John 1:1-3) He is equally God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, sharing in all the power and majesty of God. But as man He did not sit at the right hand of God till after the ascension. Then it was that Jesus, as the God-man, assumed the sovereignty over heaven and earth. For the Father "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," and "hath put all things under His feet." (Eph. 1:20-22) "Angels, authorities and powers have been made subject unto Him." (1 Pet. 3:22)

Christ Still God and Man

Jesus did not cease to be man when he ascended into Heaven and sat on the right hand of the Father. It was only as man that He needed to be or could be exalted. He is therefore still man as well as God now when He sits at the right hand of God, just as He was when He dwelt on the earth. A true human being such as we are, only without sin and glorified, now reigns over all the universe in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man. (Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16) Jesus Pleads for Us. — Sitting at the right hand of God, Jesus is our Intercessor. (Rom. 8:34) He pleads for us with the Father. He shed His blood for the remission of our sins. (Col. 1:14) And He holds up between us and His Father the merit and righteousness which He acquired for us by His

holy life and innocent death. He makes intercession for us continually. (Heb. 7:25) We have in Christ a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens — not a High Priest who “cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was Himself tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:14,15) He knows and feels all that we need; for He Himself is also man. As in Old Testament times the high-priest (Ex. 28:38) entered into God’s presence and interceded for the people, so Christ, who is ever in God’s presence, pleads for us. (Heb. 9:24) The Father Himself loves us and is disposed to grant us His grace (John 16:27) and favor. Much more will He grant it to us, when His only Son, who shed His blood for us, (Rom. 5:9) intercedes for us. We are therefore in Christ’s name to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16)

He Rules Over Us

Sitting at the right hand of God, Jesus is King and Lord over all. The Father has given all things into His hands. (John 13:3) “And He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” (1 Cor. 15:25) His kingdom is a threefold one: a kingdom of power, of grace and of glory.

His Kingdom of Power

Includes all things and all men. For He is God over all, (Rom. 9:5) and holds dominion over the whole universe. He rules over all men, good or bad, over good and bad angels, and over every other creature. All things have been “put in subjection under His feet.” (Heb. 2:8) He is “the King of kings and Lord of Lords,” to whom belongs “honor and power everlasting.” (1 Tim. 6:15,16)

His Kingdom of Grace

Includes all the believers while they are in this world.” (John 17:8-11) In this kingdom, which is called His Church, (Col. 1:13-18) He bestows upon

the believers all the blessings which He has acquired by His obedience and sufferings. (Col. 1:21,22) By means of the Word (John 17:17) of God and the sacraments (John 3:5; Eph. 5:26) He gathers, governs, preserves and defends (John 10:28) them as His own. He bestows upon them all things that they need in body (Matt. 6:33) and soul, (Rom. 8:32) and is with them “always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. 28:20)

His Kingdom of Glory

Includes the good angels (1 Pet. 3:22) and all those men who have died in the faith. (Rev. 2:10) The kingdom of grace shall be merged completely into the kingdom of glory at the end of the world. At that time Christ will raise the dead to life. And then those believers whom He has raised from the dead as well as the believers who are yet alive at the end of the world shall be taken by Christ unto Himself in heaven, (1 Thess. 4:17) that where He is “there they may be also.” (John 17:24) There they shall live and reign (Rev. 3:21) with Him in glory forever.

14. The Holy Spirit And The New Birth Which He Produces In Man.

The Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is the third person of the Holy Trinity. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, (John 14:26; John 15:26) “and with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified.” (Comp. Nicene Creed) He is true God as well as the Father and the Son, and equal to them in glory and majesty.

When Jesus sent forth His disciples to baptize all nations, He told them to do so “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” (Mat. 28:19) In the apostolic benediction which reads, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all,” (2 Cor. 13:14) the Holy Spirit is put on a level with the Father and the Son. He is called in the Scriptures Jehovah, (2 Sam. 23:2) Lord (2 Cor. 3:17) and God. (Acts 5:3,4) He is spoken of as eternal, (Heb. 9:14) omnipotent, (Isa. 11; Rom. 15:19) omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-12) and omnipresent. (Ps. 139:7) He has share in the creation (Gen. 1:2) and preservation (Job. 33:4) of the world. He instructed the prophets and teachers of old, (2 Pet. 1:21) and inspired the writing of the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16) And the entire work of sanctification, or applying to men’s souls the redemption of Jesus, is ascribed to Him.

A Person

The Holy Spirit is not merely a power or energy which God supplies, but is a Person. He is, indeed, spoken of in some passages of Scripture as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ; and this Spirit of God and Spirit of

Christ, we are told, should dwell in the believers. (Rom. 8:9) But it is the third person of the Holy Trinity that is meant, and not simply a mind or disposition such as God wants us to have. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2) on the day of Pentecost was not simply a filling of the human spirit of the apostles with enlightenment, courage and zeal in the cause of the Saviour, but the coming of a divine person into their hearts.

Acts such as only a person can do are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. He strives with sinners, (Gen. 6:3) reproves the world, (John 16:8) testifies of Christ, (John 15:26) teaches, (John 14:26) guides (John 16:13) and comforts (Acts 9:31) the believers, helps their infirmities, (Rom. 8:26) and sanctifies (Rom. 15:16) them. He is as truly a person as the Father or the Son.

His Work

The work which the Holy Ghost does in us is as necessary for our salvation as the work which Christ has done for us. Christ has indeed died for all men, and made it possible for all men to be saved if they will. When He was about to die on the cross, He said, "It is finished." (John 19:30) And so it was. The holy life had been lived and the punishment for sin endured. Justice was satisfied, and the forgiving love of God could be freely exercised. But men must be made willing and able to accept salvation. (1 Cor. 2:14) They must be brought to faith. (Acts 26:18) Without faith they would perish in spite of all that Christ has done for them. (Mark 16:16)

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to create this faith in men. In doing so, He produces a great and radical change in the soul. This change is called in the Scriptures a new birth (John 3:5,6) or regeneration. (Tit. 3:5)

Why the New Birth is Necessary

A new birth is necessary in man, because he is by nature spiritually dead. Sin has cut him off from the spiritual life which he would otherwise have drawn from God. (Eph. 4:18) He is "dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1) Therefore he has no power of his own to discern Spiritual things, (1 Cor 2:14) to recognize his lost condition, to repent of his sins, or to believe in

Christ his Saviour. He must be born again; not physically, indeed, but spiritually. (John 3:1-6) Unless he is born again, he cannot see nor enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3,5) A new spiritual life must be created in him, in order that he may be able to appropriate to himself by faith “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3:24)

No one but God can produce this new life. It is God that must work “in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. 12:3) Those in whom this new life has been wrought are born of God (1 John 5:4) and born of the Spirit. (John 3:8) They are no longer children of wrath as they were by nature, (Eph. 2:3) but have become children of God (Rom. 8:15,16) and heirs of everlasting life. (Rom. 8:17)

The Means

In order to accomplish results, men use means. The scholar writes with his pen, the mechanic works with his tools, the manufacturer uses his machines. God Himself works through means in the realm of nature. He illumines and warms the earth by means of the sun, and waters it by means of the rain. It is natural, therefore, that the Holy Spirit should use means in order to produce and sustain in men the new spiritual life. The means which He uses are the Word of God and the Sacraments. They are called the Means of Grace, because they are the means or channels through which the Holy Spirit brings God’s grace to our hearts. Through them he awakens men to a knowledge of their sin, leads them to repentance and faith, and strengthens and preserves them in the faith to the end of their life.

The Word of God

The chief means through which the Holy Spirit works in men’s hearts is the Word of God. (1 Pet. 1:23) Even in the sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, it is the Word of God, with its command and promise, that gives them their value. It is principally through the Word of God, with its Law and its Gospel, which He Himself has inspired (2 Tim. 3:16) that the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work. He is always in that Word, and through it not

only tells men what to do but gives them the power to do it. “The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Heb. 4:12) “It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Rom. 1:16) Through the Holy Spirit who constantly dwells in it, the Word of God regenerates, converts, renews, and sanctifies all who do not willfully resist its power.

Baptism

Infants, being by nature sinful (Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4) need to be born again as well as adults. (John 3:6) But as they are not yet old enough to hear and understand God’s Word, the Holy Spirit implants the new life in them through Baptism; for baptism is “a washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Ghost.” (Tit. 3:5) The new life thus implanted in infancy is nourished and strengthened in after years by the Word of God.

Human Instruments

The Holy Spirit makes use of men as His instruments in accomplishing His purpose in the soul. (1 Cor. 4:15) For this reason He founded the Christian Church and committed to it the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments. Christians thus become laborers together with God. (1 Cor. 3:9) And as workers together with Him, they beseech men not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1) Knowing the terror of the Lord and His anger against sin, they persuade men to believe in Christ and be saved. (2 Cor. 5:11)

15. How The Holy Spirit Converts Men Or Brings Them To Faith.

All who are not living a life of faith, but are impenitent and unbelieving, need to be converted or turned in faith to Christ. This includes all those who have not as infants been regenerated by the Holy Spirit in baptism, as well as all those who have fallen from their baptismal grace into sin and unbelief.

What Conversion Is

Regarded from the divine side, the change which takes place in man when he is brought to faith is called the new birth or regeneration, because it is the implanting of a new spiritual life in him by the Holy Spirit. Regarded from the human side, the change is called conversion, (Acts 3:19) because it is a converting or turning away of man from sin and self to righteousness and God.

Repentance

The word Repentance is frequently used to express the same meaning as conversion. In its narrow sense it means sorrow for sin, (Mark 1:15) like the words penitence or contrition. But in its wider sense it includes faith as well as penitence. It is frequently used in this wider sense in the Bible, and means a change of mind, a turning away of the heart from sin to God. (Joel 2:12) Thus used, the term is essentially synonymous with conversion.

True repentance always leads to faith. (2 Cor. 7:10) Sorrow for sin which does not lead to faith is not repentance but remorse, and often ends in despair. The sorrow of Peter after he denied his Lord was repentance; (Luke 22:62) that of Judas after he betrayed Christ was remorse. (Matt. 27:3-5)

The Holy Spirit Calls Men

In order that men may be converted from their sins to faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit calls them through the Gospel. (2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:20,21) He has caused the Word of God to be written (John 20:31) and causes it to be continually proclaimed (1 Cor. 1:21) for the purpose of thus making known to men the grace of God in Christ and inviting them to share in it. He bids them believe in Christ and be saved. They are to come and partake freely of God's grace; for all things are now ready. (Matt. 22:4) Every thing that is necessary for their salvation has been done, and God wants them all to believe in Christ and be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4)

He Enlightens Them

“Having the understanding darkened and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,” (Eph. 4:18) men do not, as they are by nature, realize their lost condition and their need of salvation. Therefore the Holy Spirit enlightens them through the law (John 16:8) and the Gospel, (John 15:26) showing them the peril of their sinful state and the goodness of God which desires to save them from it.

Through the Law He reveals to them not only what they ought to do, but also the guilt which they have incurred and the punishment which they have deserved by not doing what they should. (Rom. 2:3) He thus makes plain to them that they must perish unless they find a way of escape. (Luke 13:3,5)

Through the Gospel He shows them God's infinite love and mercy, (Rom. 5:6-8) how the Son of God became man and lived on earth and suffered and died to redeem them, and how willing God is to pardon them, (2 Pet. 3:9) if they will only repent of their sins and believe in Christ their Saviour.

He Gives Power to Obey the Call

Being dead in trespasses and sins, men have no power to obey the call of the Gospel. But the Holy Spirit is always in the Word of God; and through that Word, He not only tells them to believe, but also enables them to do so. (Eph. 2:4,5)

When the dead young man at Nain was told by Jesus to arise, (Luke 7:14) he had no power to hear or obey the Saviour's command. He was dead; and a dead person has no power to do anything. Yet dead though he was, that young man heard and obeyed the command of the Lord. (Luke 7:15) He did so because the word which Christ spoke was the Word of God and brought with it the power which he needed. Just so it is with the Gospel and its command to repent and be saved. It comes to men who are spiritually dead; but it brings to them the power to obey, because it is the Word of God.

He Leads Them to Repentance

If men do not willfully resist His grace, the Holy Spirit leads them to repentance. He teaches them to compare themselves with the requirements of God's holy law, and thus shows them how sinful and guilty they are in God's sight, (Ps. 51:3,4) fills their heart with sincere sorrow for their sins, (Luke 22:62) with a hatred of sin, (Ps. 51:10) and with a longing to be forgiven. (Ps. 51:2,9; Luke 18:13; Luke 15:18)

He Leads Them to Faith

Having filled men's hearts with an earnest desire for salvation, the Holy Spirit holds up Christ before them as the Saviour through Whom they may abundantly receive the remission of their sins. (1 John 2:2) He shows them what Christ has done and suffered to redeem them, and how willing God is to pardon them for Christ's sake. Thus He prevails on them to trust in Christ and to believe (Acts 4:4; Eph. 3:12) with sure confidence that God has forgiven them all their sins.

Who is Converted

It is not necessary that a Christian should be able to point to the day and hour of his conversion. Some can do so; but many others cannot. Baptized in infancy and brought up in the fear of God, the believing child of God has always lived in a regenerate state, (2 Tim. 3:15) repenting of his sins and believing in Christ. He needs no additional conversion, but has been a saved member of Christ's Church ever since he was baptized.

Among the apostles of Jesus none but Paul could point to the exact time of his conversion. (Acts 9:1-20) The faith of the others was a matter of very gradual growth. Little by little their minds were opened to the truth and their faith developed till, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it broke forth into triumphant confidence in Him? (Acts 2) But they believed in Christ long before that time. (Matt. 16:16) So it is with many others. Their conversion has been gradual, not sudden and violent; and they cannot, therefore, point to the exact time when it took place. The important question is not, when were we converted, but are we in a converted state: are we penitent and believing.

Willful Resistance

When the Holy Spirit calls men, He gives them power to repent. But His work may be resisted. Men may and often do refuse to obey the Gospel. (2 Thess. 1:8) They harden their hearts in their sins. (Rom. 2:5) By so doing, they grieve the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:30) He is patient and comes to their hearts again and again. (Rev. 3:20) But if they persist in hardening themselves against Him, (Acts 19:9) He will finally stay away. Men dare not, like Felix, wait for a convenient season. (Acts 24:25) Such a season will never come. It will never be convenient but always a trial to the flesh to turn away from sin. We must obey the call of the Gospel whenever it comes to us. (Heb. 3:7,8) Those who refuse to repent when the Spirit moves them to do so may find at last no place for repentance, though they seek it carefully with tears. (Heb 12:17) Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, (2 Cor. 6:2) tomorrow it may be too late. (Jas. 4:14)

Death Bed Repentance

Repentance or conversion even in the last hour, if sincere, saves men. This is proved by the example of the thief on the cross. (Luke 23:43) But men dare not deliberately postpone repentance till that time. They may not have time to repent then. They may not be able to repent then, even if they want to do so. The power to repent must come from God. And if the Holy Spirit has been deliberately sent away during the days of health, He may not come to their hearts in their last hour, but let them die in their sins. Out of the many wicked men described in the Bible, the thief on the cross is the only one of Whom we are told that he repented in the last hour and was saved. How many on the other hand died as they had lived, in sin and guilt! One example of repentance at the last hour is given to us, in order that no one may despair if he truly repents; but only one, so that no one may deliberately and presumptuously postpone repentance till the last hour.

16. What Faith Is.

Without faith man cannot be saved. The promise of salvation is given only to those who believe. “He that believeth is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

All Men Exercise Faith

In matters of this world all men exercise faith. A child lives by faith in its mother. A business man lives by faith that he will have custom, that his goods will arrive at a certain time, that his bank will not fail, that his customers will pay him. We all live by faith in other men. We must take their word for many things which we cannot see ourselves. We believe that they will have for sale what we need to buy in order to live. When we travel we depend on others to have the train on hand at the appointed time, and we trust the engineer, the switchman and the dispatcher with our lives. We exercise faith in others every day of our life. We depend on them to fulfill their promises and their obligations. If men refuse to believe in God, they refuse to place in Him as much trust as they put in their fellow-men.

A Matter of the Heart

Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) It is important, therefore, to know what true faith is. It is not a mere intellectual belief in the existence of God or of the truth of the facts recorded in the Bible. Many impenitent men and even the devils themselves have that kind of faith. (Jas. 2:19) But such belief is not faith in the Christian sense. Faith is not only a matter of the head, but of the heart. (Rom. 10:10)

Based on Knowledge

Though knowledge of the facts of the Gospel is by no means all that is necessary, knowledge is an essential part of faith. Men must first have knowledge of Christ and of what He has done for them, before they can believe on Him as their Saviour. (Rom. 10:14) This is why Christ commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; (Mark 16:15) why the Holy Spirit by inspiring the Bible provided men with a correct record of all that Christ has done for us: and why the Christian Church in obedience to Christ's command preaches the Gospel at home and sends forth her missionaries to preach it to the heathen.

Belief of the Facts

We must not only know the facts of the Gospel, but believe them to be true. Faith implies the taking of another's word for the truth of a statement. In this case it is the taking of God's word; for the Bible is His Word. Thus Abraham took God's word and staggered not at His promise, however unlikely its fulfillment seemed from the human standpoint, but was strong in the faith, nothing doubting but that what God had promised He was also able to perform. (Rom. 4:20, 21) Faith is accepting the truth of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) And blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe. (John 20:29)

Trust in Christ

The chief part of faith, however, is trust in the merit and righteousness of Christ. We must not only believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for the sins of men, but believe that He died for us, and that God for His sake forgives us all our sins. (1 Tim. 1:15,16) Faith is an individual appropriation of what Christ has done. It believes that through His redemption salvation is really and actually ours. (2 Tim. 4:8) It is trust; it is confidence. (2 Tim. 1:12; Eph. 3:12) It is believing for a certainty and without doubt that our sins are all washed away by Christ's precious blood. (1 John 1:7) It is to say with St. Paul, "The Son of God loved me and gave

Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20) It is taking God’s word as true and as meaning us when He promises for Christ’s sake to forgive our sins and make us heirs of eternal life.

It Must be Preceded by Repentance

There can be no true and saving faith in Christ, unless there first be true repentance for sin. The promise of forgiveness is not made to the impenitent but only to those who sincerely repent. The impenitent cannot have faith, because no promise has been made to them. On the contrary, they have been expressly assured that, as long as they remain impenitent, they have nothing to expect but eternal condemnation. (Rom. 2:4,5) Before a man can believe in Christ as his Saviour, he must first see that he needs a Saviour and must desire to have one. Only then can he or will he accept by faith the mercy which is offered to him in Christ.

Faith is Certainty

Faith is the very opposite of doubt. (Jas. 1:6,7) True faith gives men the certainty (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 John 3:2; Col. 1:12-14) of eternal life. For it is based on the promise of God. And “God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.” (Num. 23:19) A Christian not only may but should be certain of his salvation. If he believes God’s promise, how can he doubt it? His salvation is not at all dependent on what he may be able to do, but upon what Christ has done for Him, and on God’s plain promise to give him everlasting life for Christ’s sake. (John 3:16) What Christ has done is complete and perfect, and what God has promised he will certainly perform. (2 Tim. 2:13)

Doubts

Even true believers have seasons when their faith is tried and doubts assail them. Satan is ever active, seeking to cause them to fall from the faith. (1 Pet. 5:8) He endeavors to make them doubt God’s grace and forgiveness

and to lose their confidence in Him. But the Holy Spirit enables them to overcome. He dwells in their hearts (1 Cor. 3:16) and bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. (Rom. 8:16) When such periods of stress are over, the faith of the Christian grows all the stronger. He again has peace and unshaken confidence in Christ, and can say with St. Paul, "I know in Whom I have believed." (2 Tim. 1:12)

Faith Should Grow

Faith will save us, if it be a true faith, even though it be small or weak. But it ought to grow and increase in strength day by day like a healthy plant. We are to pray for its increase, (Mark 9:24) and faithfully to use the means of grace. If we do, our faith will grow; (2 Thess. 1:3) and we shall be rooted and built up in Christ. (Col. 2:7) As a result of such growth we shall have increasing confidence in God, (Eph. 3:16-19) greater joy and peace in our soul, (Rom. 15:13) deeper love to God (Rom. 5:5) and our fellow-man, (1 Thess. 3:12) and greater strength to overcome the world. (1 John 5:4)

Faith Should be Permanent

Faith should not be spasmodic or occasional, but a firmly established and continuous condition of the soul. (Col. 1:23) We are to trust in Christ and in the Triune God not only at times but always. Our whole life is to be one of faith. We are to permit nothing to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, (Rom. 8:35-38) but to be faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of everlasting life. (Rev. 2:10)

Faith May Decay and Die

If it is fed and nourished on the Word of God, faith grows; (Acts 20:32) but if not, it decays and dies. Some for a time believe, but in time of temptation fall away. (Luke 8:13) Many make shipwreck of their faith by deliberately doing that which their own conscience tells them is wrong. (1 Tim. 1:19) Such shipwreck is sure to follow if Christ is not permitted to rule in the

heart (Eph. 3:17) and the promptings of His Spirit are unheeded. (Eph. 4:30) When faith has perished, salvation is lost. It remains lost as long as such persons do not again come to true repentance and faith.

17. We Are Saved By Faith Alone Without Works.

Those who enter into heaven will do so, not because they have deserved (2 Tim. 1:9) to enter, but because they believe in Christ their Saviour. (Eph. 1:7) Salvation is altogether a gift of God's grace. (Eph. 2:8,9) It cannot be earned or merited by our works. We can only accept what God's grace offers through Christ. (Rom. 4:5) We are saved by faith alone without works. (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16)

Grace and Faith

Salvation is spoken of in the Bible as becoming ours both by grace (2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:7) and by faith. (Rom. 5:1) But the same thing is meant by both terms. Salvation is by grace, because God bestows it upon us freely for Christ's sake and without any merit on our part. It is by faith, because by faith we accept the salvation which God freely offers. The relation between the two is expressed by St. Paul when he says, "By grace ye are saved through faith." (Eph. 2:8)

Saved by Faith

It is God's will that men should be saved by faith. (1 Tim. 2:4-6) When in His infinite love He sent His only Son into the world to redeem men, He did so in order that "whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) When the Saviour had completed His work of redemption and sent His disciples forth to preach the Gospel to all nations, His words were, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16) And when the Philippian

jailor anxiously inquired what he must do to be saved, the answer of the apostle was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31)

Why Faith Saves

Faith saves us, not because it is regarded by God as a merit on our part and therefore rewarded with salvation, but because it is the grateful acceptance of what God freely offers. It is no more a merit on our part than it is a merit on the part of the beggar when he reaches out his hand to receive the gift that is bestowed upon him.

We are Justified by Faith

In order that we may be saved, we must first be pronounced by God to be righteous and fit to enter into heaven. (Rev. 21:27) This is expressed in the Bible by the word “justify.” To be justified means to be pronounced righteous. We are justified by faith. (Rom. 5:1; Rom. 4:5) For by faith we take hold of and cling to Christ and present Him before God as our substitute who has done for us all that needs to be done to make us righteous. (Rom. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21) If we believe in Him, then through Him we have met the strictest demands of God’s justice; (Rom. 8:2,3) and when God looks on us, He beholds not our own guilt and unrighteousness, but the righteousness of Christ which we have put on by faith. (Phil. 3:9)

What Justification Is

Justification is the sinner’s acquittal from the charges of the law which he has broken. (Rom. 8:33) It is the act of God in which, as our Law-giver and Judge, He pronounces us free for Christ’s sake from the guilt of our sins and from the punishment which we have deserved. (Rom. 8:1) We are not by our justification made sinless and holy creatures. But by it the guilt of our sins is taken away, God’s wrath and punishment are turned aside from us,

(Rom. 5:9) and we are received into His favor. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1)

Not by Works

If men kept God's law perfectly, they would be saved by their works. (Rom. 4:4) But no man does or can keep it thus. (Rom. 3:23) We are born sinful beings, (Job. 14:4) and break God's law daily in many ways. (Rom. 3:10-12) By our works we deserve not salvation but condemnation. (Rom. 3:19) So far as our works are concerned, we are under the curse; "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10)

It was because of men's unrighteousness and their utter inability to be anything else but unrighteous, that God sent His Son into the world to acquire righteousness for them. (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21) If they could have saved themselves, He would have let them do so, (Gal. 3:21) and would not have sent His only Son to suffer and die. But righteousness cannot come to us by keeping the law. (Rom. 3:20) The law simply shows us our sinfulness. It is meant to do so, and thus to become our school-master (Gal. 3:24) to bring us to Christ, in order that we may be justified by faith in Him.

By Faith Alone

Our works have nothing to do with obtaining salvation, either before we believe or after we believe. (Rom. 3:28) Before we believe, we cannot do any good works; (Heb. 11:6) for whatever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23) And after we believe, we are already justified by our faith before we have any opportunity to do good works.

Every one who has faith will do good works. (Rom. 6:11) But he will do them not in order to be saved, but because he has faith and is saved. In our justification before God, nothing has any weight but the merits of Jesus Christ made ours by faith. (Gal. 3:22) If our works had anything to do with our justification, they would only cause us to be lost; for the works of even the best Christians are imperfect. (Rom. 7:18-23)

“Then St. James speaks of Abraham as being justified by his works, (Jas. 2:21) he refers to Abraham’s works as the outward evidence (Jas. 2:22) of his justification; for two verses farther on he himself declares that Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness.” (Jas. 2:23)

In Old Testament Times

Salvation by faith alone is not taught in the New Testament only, but in the Old Testament as well. Men have been justified and saved from the earliest times by faith and not by works. (Gen. 15:6) Men were just as sinful and helpless by nature then as now, and had to be saved by the same grace of God which saves us. Their faith was counted to them for righteousness, just as ours is. (Rom. 4:23,24) Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab and many others (Heb. 11:4-10) are described in the Scriptures as people who had faith and were on this account acceptable to God. The Saviour had, indeed, not yet come. But they believed the promise of His coming, and had faith in the mercy of God.

It is true, God gave the Israelites His law and commanded them to obey it. But they were to keep it because they believed in Him as their God (Exod. 20:2) and loved Him, (Deut. 6:5) and not for the purpose of earning salvation by their deeds. Faith is expressly mentioned as the condition of salvation. (2 Chron. 20:20; Isa. 7:9; Hab. 2:4) And we are told that God spared the Ninevites from the destruction which they had deserved by their sins, because they believed the preaching of His prophet Jonah. (Jonah 3:5,10)

Although the doctrine of justification by faith is brought out more fully in the New Testament than in the Old, it is taught in the Old Testament also. God’s way of salvation has been the same in every age. “The just shall live by faith.” (Gal. 3:11; Hab. 2:4) Men never were and never will be justified by works, but by faith alone.

18. The Holy Life Of The Christian.

Although the Christian is not justified by his works but by faith alone, he will and must lead a holy life.

A New Creature

The believer has been born again, “not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13) He is therefore “a new creature. Old things are passed away; all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17) His heart has been changed by grace. His mind is no longer “enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7) but is conformed to God’s mind. (Rom. 12:2) He now desires to do the very things which God wills that he should do. (Rom. 7:22) He has new aims and aspirations, (Rom. 8:5) new motives and principles of action, (2 Cor. 5:14) new desires and hopes. (Rom. 8:18,23) He is dead unto sin, but alive unto God. (Rom. 6:11) He lives, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him; and the life which he now lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. (Gal. 2:20)

A New Life

Out of the heart are the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23) As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7) Since the believer’s heart has been changed, his conduct is necessarily and inevitably changed also. His holy life is the outward evidence of the change that has taken place within him. (Rom. 6:22) He has been made a new creature in Christ Jesus that he might do good works, and was before ordained that he should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10) He therefore puts off “concerning the former conversation the old

man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” and becomes renewed in the spirit of his mind, and puts on “the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24)

A Holy Life Necessary

Those who are true believers do not and cannot live in sin. “How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2) Faith is a new life principle (Eph. 2:5) in man and necessarily results in a new life of obedience to God. (Rom. 6:5,6) While our good works have nothing to do with our justification, faith that does not result in good works is dead. (Jas. 2:26) It is only a seeming and not a real faith. Living faith, like a good tree, will bear fruit. True believers are genuinely sorry for their sins, and they cannot, therefore, do otherwise than turn away from their sins and follow after holiness.

Christ Demands It

The Saviour demands a holy life of His disciples. They are to let their light shine before men, that their good works may be seen and their Father in heaven glorified. (Matt. 5:16) If they love Him they are to keep His commandments (John 14:15) and follow His example. (1 Pet. 2:21) Not every one that says to Him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of His Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21) If men live after the flesh, they shall die; but if through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body, they shall live. (Rom. 8:13)

It Involves a Conflict

To lead a holy life involves a constant inner conflict against sin. (Gal. 5:16,17) The frailty of human nature clings to the believer as long as he lives. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matt. 26:41) The old evil nature is not eradicated, but remains in him alongside of the new nature which God has given him. He delights in the law of God after the

inward man; but there is a law in his members that wars against the law of his mind, (Rom. 7:21-24) and makes it difficult for him to do the will of God. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.” (Gal. 5:17) The believer often finds with St. Paul, that the good which he would he does not, and the evil which he would not, that he does. (Rom. 7:19) This evil nature must be continually fought against and overcome. (Col. 3:5-10) If it is not subdued and held in subjection, it will regain the mastery over him and cause him to fall from the faith. (1 Cor. 9:27)

None Perfectly Holy

The Christian will never become perfectly holy in this world. The conflict of flesh and spirit will continue to the end of his life. (Rom. 7:24) He will never be entirely free from sins of weakness. He must live a life of daily repentance, that he may be daily forgiven. He will always have abundant occasion to pray each day in the words of the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” (Matt. 6:12) For “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8,9)

The Christian Aspires to be Holy

Though the believer’s attainments fall far short of his aim, he aspires to be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5:48) Owing to the weakness which clings to us, we cannot keep God’s law perfectly even with our best efforts. But we must try to do so. However lacking we may be in the perfection of our attainment, we must not be lacking in sincere and honest effort. (Phil. 3:12-14) Our aspirations and strivings are ever to be toward those things which are good and holy. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,” (Phil. 4:8) — these are the

things we are to think of and strive to attain. And when we fail to attain them, we are to be filled with genuine sorrow for our failure.

He Grows in Holiness

When we are brought to faith in Christ and are thus born again, we are spiritual babes. (1 Cor. 3:1) But we are to grow till we reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13) We shall reach His perfection only after we are transformed and glorified in the world to come. (1 John 3:2) But we are to approach to it more and more even here on earth. (Eph. 4:14,15; 2 Pet. 3:18) We cannot do so by our own power; but we can by the help of God. (2 Cor. 12:9) His grace will support us. (Isa. 40:29,31) “He who has begun the good work in us will also perform it” to the end. (Phil. 1:6) He sanctifies us through the truth; His word is truth. (John 17:17) - The GosPel, when received by faith, becomes a power in our hearts and lives (I Cor. 1:18,30) to conform us more and more to a likeness with Jesus our Saviour.

What We Must Do

But in order that this end may be attained, we ourselves must cooperate with the grace of God. We must diligently hear and read God’s Word, (John 5:39) heed its reproof, (Rev. 2:7) obey its commands, (1 Thess. 4:1,2; Jas. 1:22) and accept its consolations. (Acts 2:37,39) We must obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us, (Rom. 8:14) and never deliberately do what is wrong. We must watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. (Matt. 26:41) And we must constantly seek help and strength from God (Col. 1:9) to overcome the sinful promptings of our own heart, the allurements of the world, and the whisperings of Satan.

His Motives

The holiness of the Christian is not a matter to be settled between him and the law of Moses. Believing in Christ, he has through Christ fulfilled that

law and is free from it. (Rom. 8:2,3; Gal. 3:24-26) It is not the old law of Moses that constrains the Christian to lead a new life, but the new law of the Gospel, a law operating, not from without, but from within. It is a law which says, not like that of Moses, “Do this or omit that under penalty of punishment,” but which says “the love of Christ constraineth me.” (1 Cor. 5:14) It is not the fear of punishment, but the love of God (Rom. 8:15) implanted in the heart, which actuates the believer to lead a life of holiness. As his faith grows stronger and his love to God deepens, his life becomes more and more conformed to God’s will.

The Law not Abrogated

While Christ has freed the Christian from the Mosaic law, He has not annulled that law (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 3:31) nor its decree against sin. It is only he who has true faith and who therefore has truly repented of sin, who is freed from the alternative of fulfilling that law or else suffering its penalty. All others are still bound by it. The wages of sin still is death. (Rom. 6:23) Sin unrepented of leads to eternal destruction. For this reason the believer dare not argue that because he has fulfilled the law in Christ and is free from it, he may sin with impunity. (1 Pet. 2:16; Gal. 5:13) If he sins willfully, he lacks repentance and therefore lacks faith. (Rom. 6:15,16) Such a person is still under the law and subject to its condemnation. Those who make the grace of God a cloak for an impenitent persistence in sin will find themselves on the day of judgment placed in the same class with those who never professed to believe in Christ, and will share eternal punishment with them. (Rom. 8:13)

19. Concerning Satan The Tempter.

The Christian must not only contend against the promptings of his own evil nature within him, but against the temptations of Satan.

Who Satan Is

Satan is not an evil principle in man tempting him to sin. For the Saviour had no evil principle in Him, yet He was tempted forty days and forty nights by the devil. (Mark 1:13) Satan is a person, a wicked spirit. He was not created evil, but was once a good angel; for everything that God made was good. (Gen. 1:31) But he sinned (2 Pet. 2:4) against God and became a bad angel, a devil. The Bible does not expressly state what the sin was which he committed; but it probably was pride or a desire to be equal with God. (Matt. 4:9)

How Described

Satan is described in the Bible as the originator of sin, a liar and murderer from the beginning. (John 8:44) He is the serpent who beguiled Eve by his subtlety, (Gen. 3:4) who deceives the whole world, (Rev. 12:9) and who seeks to corrupt the minds of the Christians. (2 Cor. 11:3) He is the one whose power Jesus came into the world to break, (1 John 3:8) and who otherwise would have continued to hold us in bondage (Heb. 2:15) and oppression. (Acts 10:38) He is the wicked spirit who works in the children of disobedience. (Eph. 2:2) He is the god of this world whom the wicked serve, and who keeps them in his service by blinding their minds so that the light of the Gospel does not shine into them. (2 Cor. 4:4) He is an

exceedingly powerful foe, to prevail against whom Christians must put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to withstand in the evil hour, and, having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:11,13)

His Names

The name Satan means adversary, and he is so called because he is the bitter foe of God and man. (1 Chron. 21:1) He is called the devil, or accuser, because he accuses men before God and demands of God's justice that the same punishment which is measured out to him for his sins be inflicted on men for their sins. (Rev. 12:10) He is called Belial, (2 Cor. 6:15) the worthless one. He is called also the prince of this world, (John 14:30) because he rules in the hearts of impenitent men; and the god of this world, (2 Cor. 4:4) because he is the master whom they worship and serve by their sin. He is the great Dragon or serpent (Rev. 12:9) whose power and subtlety are to be dreaded and guarded against.

A Chief

Satan is not the only fallen angel. Though he is frequently called the devil by preeminence, there are many devils. There was a whole legion of them in the demoniac of Gadara. (Mark 5:9) When Satan fell, he carried many other angels with him, having persuaded them also to sin against God. (2 Pet. 2:4) There is a kingdom of darkness and evil not only in a figurative but an actual sense, — a kingdom in which there are various ranks, principalities, powers and rulers. (Eph. 6:12) Satan is its chief, (Matt. 12:24) the prince of darkness, who has under him innumerable other spirits. While these wicked spirits are at war with God and pious men, they are at one among themselves; if they were not, their kingdom would fall. (Matt. 12:26)

His Power

Satan and his angels by their fall lost the heavenly glory which had been theirs. But just as man retained much of his power after the fall, so the wicked angels retained much of theirs. They still remain powerful spirits, though now their powers are directed solely toward that which is evil. They hate God, and are filled with envy and rage against the good angels and pious men. Their power is exceedingly great, — far greater than that of man. (Eph. 6:38,39) But it is limited by God. (Rom. 8:29) They can do no more than God permits them to do. They are already suffering some of the penalties of their sin. They are banished from the presence of God, cast down into hell, (2 Pet. 2:4) and given over to their own evil thoughts and ways. But a greater punishment still is reserved for them. (Jude 6) On the day of judgment they shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night forever. (Rev. 20:10)

His Aim

Satan cannot harm God; therefore he tries to harm men, whom God loves. He brings all his resources to bear upon them to lead them to destruction. He goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. 5:8) He endeavors to harm them in body and property as well as in soul. It was he who brought the terrible succession of calamities upon Job, (Job 1 and 2) and who constantly tormented St. Paul with a physical affliction? (2 Cor. 12:7) In the Saviour's time he frequently took possession of men's bodies. (Matt. 4:24) But his chief aim is to ruin men's souls and thus frustrate God's gracious purpose of saving them. (Matt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 4:4)

He Seeks to Prevent Men from Believing

Satan endeavors to harden men in their sins, so that they may not obey the truth (Gal. 3:1) of the Gospel. For this purpose he makes the world with its business and pleasures as attractive to them as possible, (Luke 8:14) and tempts them to those sins to which their own natural heart most strongly inclines them. And when they hear the Word of God, he immediately comes and takes it out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. (Luke 8:12)

He Seeks to Destroy the Believers

Satan not only tries to prevent men from believing, but does his utmost to win back those who do believe. (2 Cor. 11:3) He tempts them to sin and unbelief. And unless they are constantly on their guard against him, (1 Pet. 5:8) he will lead them to destruction.

He is the Tempter

It was Satan who persuaded Eve to doubt God's word and transgress His command. (Gen. 3:1,6; 2 Cor. 11:3) And he has been behind every sin that has been committed since that time. It was he who tempted Peter (Luke 22:31) to deny his Lord; who put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Saviour; (John 13:2) and who filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost and keep back part of the price of his land. (Acts 5:3) It is he who tempts all men and leads them on in the way of sin.

How He Comes

Satan seldom reveals his real purpose when he tempts men. He does not give warning of his approach, but is exceedingly subtle and cunning. The statement that he goes about as a roaring lion is meant to give expression to his power and his thirst for men's souls, but does not describe the manner of his approach. He transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14) He poses as our friend and well-wisher. He pretended that he was pointing out to Eve how to attain greater happiness, (Gen. 3:4,5) and that he did not like to see the Saviour suffer hunger. (Matt. 4:3) He represents the course of sin which he desires us to follow as the very course which will bring us most happiness. He minimizes its sinfulness and danger, tells us we are not expected to deny ourselves all pleasure in life, and points to the example of others who do as he desires us to do. He tempts us through the desires of our own heart, through the objects of sense around us, through wicked men, and sometimes even through those who really mean to be our friends but who are themselves deceived by Satan.

He Must Be Resisted. (Eph. 4:27)

If we resist the devil, he will flee from us. (Jas. 4:7) But if we yield to him, he will come to us more and more with his evil promptings and finally bring us completely under his dominion. We must not underrate his power; for he is the head of a powerful kingdom of evil. In contending against him " we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) To fight against him means vastly more than to contend against men. We could not possibly win by our own power. But every believer (Eph. 6:16) can win the victory with God's help. (Rom. 16:20)

The Means to be Used

The means which we must use in order to overcome the devil are watchfulness, (Eph. 6:18) the Word of God, (Eph. 6:15) faith, (Eph. 6:16) and prayer. (Eph. 6:18) With these weapons Christ was victorious over Satan in the wilderness, (Matt. 4:1-11) and with these we also can conquer. If we fail to do so, it will be our own fault, because we do not use the means which God places at our disposal. Powerful as the devil is, he cannot harm those who sincerely live by faith in Christ. The Saviour has delivered us from the power of the devil. He gives us power to overcome Satan's temptations; and He shields us against Satan's accusations by holding up His own sufferings as a complete satisfaction to God's justice for our sins.

20. The Christian Church.

On the day of Pentecost, ten days after His ascension into heaven, Christ poured out the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4) and thus founded His Church. For it was after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost that the Gospel of the crucified and risen Saviour was first preached, that the first converts were made, and the first Christian baptisms performed. (Acts 2:14-41)

What the Church Is

The Church is “the communion of saints” or, in other words, the fellowship of those who are true believers in Christ. It is the institution through which the Holy Spirit carries on His saving work of applying the redemption of Christ to the souls of men through the Word of God and the sacraments; and in which He gathers, guides and sanctifies those whom He has brought to faith. The Church is found wherever the Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are rightly administered. For wherever these are found, there are also found some who truly believe. (Isa. 55:10,11)

Invisible

As a spiritual fellowship of believers, the Church is invisible. The bodies of believers can of course be seen, and their faith can be recognized by their works. But as one man cannot read the heart of another, no one can tell just who is a believer and who is not. God alone can tell who are His. (2 Tim. 2:19) Christ knows His own. (John 10:14)

In What Sense Visible

The Church may also be regarded as an external organization. In this sense the Church is visible, and includes all those who are outwardly united with those who profess to be Christians. It is composed of many individual churches scattered throughout the world and belonging to many different denominations, who with more or less purity teach the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ. It includes many who are not really believers at heart, and whom Christ, therefore, does not recognize as members of the true and invisible Church. There are tares among the wheat; (Matt. 13:26) and because of the outward similarity between them, they cannot be told apart or separated by man. (Matt. 13:29) They will remain side by side until the judgment-day, when they will be separated from one another by the angels. (Matt. 13:39-41)

On Earth and in Heaven

The Church, being identical with the Kingdom of God, is found both on earth and in heaven. To the Church in heaven belong those who have died in the faith and have gone to their eternal reward. (Rev. 7:9,14) It is called the Church Triumphant, because its members have Won the victory of faith and through the power of Christ have triumphed over all their foes. The Church on earth is called the Church Militant; that is, the Church which is still fighting the good fight of faith. (1 Tim. 6:12) None will ever belong to the Church Triumphant who have not belonged to the Church Militant. Unless men are believers they cannot be saved. He who does not fight the battle cannot win the victory. All those in the Church Militant who are faithful unto death shall belong to the Church Triumphant." Him that overcometh, Christ will grant to sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

But One Church

The Christians are divided into many different churches, denominations and sects. But the Church itself is essentially one. It is composed of the true believers out of all these churches and denominations. There is one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:16) Believers may and do live in widely

separated places, and are distinguished by many differences of race, language and custom. But as members of the Church they are one. It is for this reason that the Church is called the Catholic (not Roman Catholic) or Universal Church.

Other Names

The Church is called Holy, because the Holy Spirit is constantly at work in it, seeking to make men holy; and because its members, while by no means perfect, lead holy lives by the grace of God. It is called the Christian Church, because it is composed of those who believe in Christ. It is called Apostolic, because its faith rests on the witness and preaching of the apostles, (Eph. 2:20) who were with Christ, heard what He said, and saw what He did and suffered.

Christ and the Church

The Church is the body of Christ, and He is its head. (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18) He is the Lord of the Church. He rules in it by grace; and He defends it against its enemies, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18)

Believers United with Christ

The members of the Church are intimately united with Christ. He is the Head; they are the body. He is the vine; they are the branches. (John 15:5) They can live spiritually only when they abide in Him by faith. (John 15:4) Every branch that does not bear fruit is cut off and cast away. (John 15:2) Such a person ceases to be a member of Christ's Church, though he may outwardly continue his connection with the visible Church.

United with One Another

Being members of the one body of Christ, believers are not only united to Christ by faith, but through Him are united to one another. (1 Cor. 12:12) They are, therefore, to dwell together in love, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:2,3) Each believer has his own particular work and functions to perform as a member of Christ's body. Each is useful and necessary in his place, even the humblest. (1 Cor. 12:22) One cannot say to the other that he has no need of him, just as the eye cannot say to the hand or the head to the feet, "I have no need of thee." (1 Cor. 12:21) All the members of the Church are to work together in harmony for the accomplishment of the ends which Christ their Head desires.

Its Work

Christ has given His Church a work to do. It is to make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:19) The apostles to whom the command was given to go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) were the representatives of the whole Church, and through them the work was laid on all. The Church is the human instrumentality through which the Holy Spirit carries on His work in the souls of men.

Its Tools

In order to do its work, the Church has been supplied with appropriate tools. These are the Word of God and the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the means of grace. The Church is to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, in order that through them men may obtain the blessings of Christ's redemption. These tools are mighty for the accomplishment of the Church's work, because they are endowed with supernatural power by the Holy Spirit. They are the power of God unto salvation, (Rom. 1:16) not because those who handle them possess such extraordinary skill in their use, (1 Cor. 2:1-4) but because the Holy Spirit works through them. It is the Holy Spirit who regenerates, converts, renews and sanctifies men.

Its Workmen

The actual preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, as well as the exercise of the power to declare the remission of sins to believers, (John 20:23) is committed to those who are set apart to the Christian ministry. They are to be properly called and ordained to the office by the Church. (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5) They are not the successors of the apostles; for while the apostles also exercised all the functions of the Christian ministry, they held a much higher position than the ministry. The apostles were the witnesses of all that Christ did and suffered; and on their testimony, as given in their preaching and writings, the Church rests. (Eph. 2:20)

Their Rank

The New Testament recognizes no differences of rank in the ministry. Presbyters or elders and bishops or overseers were but different names for the same office and were used interchangeably. (Acts 20:17,28) It was only at a later period that the office of a bishop was made superior to that of the regular ministry.

Their Duties

Ministers are ambassadors of Christ to beseech men to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:20) God speaks to men through them. He who hears them, hears Christ; he who despises them, despises Christ. (Luke 10:16) They are to preach the Word in season and out of season, (2 Tim. 4:2-5) whether men will heed or not. They are to watch over the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. (Acts 20:28) They are answerable for the souls committed to their charge: and they are to be obeyed as those who have the rule over us. (Heb. 13:17) They are to set a good example of holy living. (1 Tim. 3:2) Should any of them be hypocrites, however, their hypocrisy would not invalidate their official acts. The unbelief of man cannot make the promise of God of none effect. (Rom. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:13)

21. The Bible Is The Word Of God.

The first and most important of the Church's tools for doing its work is the Bible.

Why the Bible is Needed

Nature tells of the existence of God, (Ps. 19:1) but does not reveal His will. Conscience tells us something of His will, (Rom. 2:14,15) but its knowledge has become very dim since the Fall into sin. (Rom. 1:21-23) Neither nature nor conscience can tell us anything of God's gracious plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we are to have any adequate knowledge of God's will, and any knowledge at all of His infinite love and grace, it must be through a special revelation of God. This revelation has been given to us in the Bible.

What the Bible Contains

The Bible consists of the Old and New Testaments. It contains Law and Gospel, — Law, telling us what we ought to do, and Gospel, telling us how we are to be saved. It contains narratives and prophecies also, which are not strictly a part of either Law or Gospel, but which may be arranged under one or the other head as having a direct or indirect relation to it. The Old Testament is often spoken of as containing the Law, and the New Testament as containing the Gospel. Strictly speaking, there is Law and Gospel in both; but the Law preponderates in the Old, and the Gospel in the New Testament. The Gospel of the Old Testament is prophetic; in the New Testament it is based on an accomplished fact. The Old Testament was

preparatory to the New; and the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old. The New Testament is the culmination of God's revelation to man. (Heb. 1:1,2; Heb. 2:1-3)

The Bible God's Word

The Bible is the Word of God. It is not a book of human devising, (2 Pet. 1:21) but was written "by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16) It not only contains God's Word, but it is His Word. It is an inspired Book.

The Old Testament

We have the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself for the divine authority of the Old Testament. He quoted from it as an infallible source of appeal when He repelled the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. (Matt. 4:4,7,10) At other times also He referred to its divine authority. (Luke 10:25,26; Matt. 22:35-40) Throughout the entire New Testament the inspiration of the Old Testament is taken as an established fact. Peter and Paul give explicit expression to this fact when they tell us that "the prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (2 Pet. 1:21) and that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16)

The New Testament

Christ promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. (John 16:13) This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the disciples. (Acts 2:1-4) They at once began to preach the Gospel. (Acts 2:14) And ever afterwards they were conscious of speaking by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. 2:13) and consequently of speaking that which was infallibly true. If even an angel from heaven taught anything different from that which they taught, he should be accursed. (Gal. 1:8)

What the apostles wrote was identical in substance with what they preached. It was the same Gospel and was uttered by inspiration of the same Spirit. Therefore St. Paul commanded the Thessalonians to hold fast all that they had learned from him, whether by word of mouth or by letter. (2 Thess. 2:15) He commanded them to read his epistle to all the brethren, (1 Thess. 5:27) and thereby intimated that they were to pay as much heed to it as they would to the same truths if uttered by him in person. He does, indeed, at one place distinguish between what he says and What Christ says; (1 Cor. 7:10,12) but he asserts in the very same chapter also, that He has the Spirit of the Lord. (1 Cor 7:40) He expressly declares that what he is writing are the commands of the Lord. (1 Cor. 14:37) And he thanks God that the Thessalonians received his utterances, not as the word of man, but as they were in truth, the Word of God. (1 Thess. 2:13)

Peculiarities of Style

The style in which the various books of the Bible are written bear traces of the characteristics of their several authors. The apostles have left the impress of their personality upon their writings. This is especially the case with St. John and St. Paul. But this does not argue against the inspiration of what they wrote. They did not write as mere machines. God used them and their diversified talents for the purpose of conveying His will to men. The Holy Spirit put into their minds and hearts what to write, and directed them in the writing itself, so that they did not err in any matter that affected His will. But He did not destroy their individuality. Each wrote in the style peculiar to himself. Sometimes they even added matters of a strictly personal nature, such as Paul's request to Timothy to bring his cloak (2 Tim. 4:13) to him, and the personal advice which he gives Timothy concerning his health. (1 Tim. 5:23)

How They Wrote

The writers of the Biblical books wrote as men to men, and often strained every faculty of their mind to the utmost, as is evident from the impassioned utterances, elaborate arguments and sudden transitions in

St. Paul's epistles. But at the same time they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and produced a correct and unerring record of everything that the Holy Ghost desired to communicate to men, and of all that in any way affects the truth of salvation.

The Gospel Records

The contrast which may be found between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke on the one hand and that of John on the other is due to their different way of treating the history of our Lord. The first three evangelists start with the human nature of Christ and lead us up to His divinity, while John starts with the divine nature, the eternal Word, and leads us down to the humanity of Christ. Both narratives give the same history, but from a different standpoint. By taking them together we have a complete view of the God-man, both from the human and the divine side of His Being.

The Bible and Science

As the Bible does not undertake to teach science but religion, it is to be regarded from the religious and not the scientific standpoint. It is not to be expected to teach the results of human investigation. Its writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit with a supernatural knowledge of religion; but on other subjects they knew no more than the other men of their day. Yet when the facts of science are well established and are not mere theories, they are found to harmonize in a remarkable manner with the Holy Scriptures. The more the secrets of nature and of history are brought to light, the more corroboration they give to the teachings and narratives of the Bible.

The Bible Its Own Best Witness

The inspiration of the Bible is proved by its contents. It contains information which no man by his own power could ever have discovered or known. It foretells events which no uninspired man could ever have

foreseen. It contains teachings so exalted, that they could never have originated in the depraved heart of man, and are not even approached by the writings of the noblest among the heathen sages and philosophers. It gives evidence of a divine power such as no book of simply human origin ever did or can possess. Its power is manifest in all the history of the Church's past, and in the Church today. Every conversion is a miracle of God's grace, wrought through the Word of God. We cannot hear or read the Bible without feeling and knowing by the manner in which it takes hold on our heart, that God Himself is speaking to us and searching out the innermost recesses of our soul. For "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12)

Why It was Written

The Bible was "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4) It is meant to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, (Ps. 119:105) to lead us through the darkness of this world (2 Pet. 1:19) to our home in heaven. It contains all that we need to know of God in this world, and all that is necessary to lead us to repentance, to faith, and to a right Christian life. Its center and core is Christ, (John 5:39) in whom lies our only but sure hope of salvation. (Acts 4:12) It is an unerring guide to the truth. It is the final and absolute authority in matters of religion. Before it, all human authority, however great, must bow and give way. Any one who teaches contrary to it is accursed. (Gal. 1:9) Any one who adds to or subtracts from its teachings shall be stricken from God's book of life. (Rev. 22:18,19) It is the only revelation which God will give to men. If its testimony is not accepted, God will not send anyone back from the dead to assure men of its truth. (Luke 16:31) We must take heed, therefore, to what it says. If we fail to do so, we shall be lost. (Heb. 2:1-3)

22. Baptism.

When Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded. (Matt. 28:19) Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved, but those who believe not shall be damned. (Matt. 16:16)

What Baptism Is

Baptism consists in applying water to a person “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” in accordance with Christ’s command. A distinction must be made between the baptism administered by the disciples after Christ’s ascension and that administered by John the Baptist. That of John was a baptism unto repentance. (Acts 19:4) It was only an outward sign or symbol of the spiritual cleansing which had taken place in men through their repentance. It did not confer any particular grace of God. But Christian baptism is a means of grace, — a channel through which the Holy Spirit confers special blessings upon us. It is the means through which He produces regeneration or the new birth in the hearts of children, (Tit. 3:5) and the means through which He formally introduces adults into the kingdom of God as His disciples, after they have been regenerated or brought to faith through the Word of God. (Matt. 28:19)

What Baptism Does

Those who are baptized are received into the covenant with God, and become sharers in the atoning death of Jesus. They are baptized into Christ’s death; (Rom. 6:3) and all that He has done is thrown open to them

and becomes their possession, if they believe. (Gal. 3:27) To the believer, therefore, baptism brings the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. (Mark 16:16) It is a washing away of sin, (Acts 22:16) and a washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost. (Tit. 3:5) It is God's way of adopting us as His children, and making us heirs of everlasting life.

Why Necessary

Baptism is necessary for all, because Christ has commanded all to be baptized, (Matt. 28:19) and because He has connected the blessings of salvation with it. (Mark 16:16) Those who neglect or despise baptism are, therefore, disobedient to Christ, and deprive themselves of the blessings which He has connected with this sacrament. Just as Naaman, (2 Kings 5:8-14) the Syrian, could not have been cured of his leprosy, if he had refused to go to the Jordan and wash when the prophet told him to go; so men cannot be cured of the leprosy of their sin, if they refuse to be baptized. It was not the water of the Jordan that cured Naaman; and yet without that water he could not have been cured, because the promise was bound up with the use of the water and would not have availed him otherwise. It is not the water in baptism that cures us of our sins; yet without the water we cannot be cured, because the promise of forgiveness and salvation is bound up with the water of baptism. It is the promise of God that gives baptism its value, and our faith which makes its blessings our own.

The Mode of Baptism

Baptism may be administered either by immersion of the whole body in water, or by pouring or sprinkling water on the head. Baptism administered by immersion is valid baptism; but it is not advisable, especially in our climate. Immersion is not essential. Baptism is just as valid if performed by the more convenient mode of pouring or sprinkling; and it is thus administered

by the majority of Christian churches. It is not the amount of water, but the application of water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost that makes baptism what it is. In many cases, such as extreme

sickness, it would be impossible to administer baptism, however greatly desired by the patient, if it had to be done by immersion. And yet Christ has commanded all men to be baptized, and certainly wants none to be excluded who sincerely desire to receive baptism.

Meaning of the Word

The Saviour did not coin a new word to designate this sacrament. He employed a Greek word which was already in use. That word, from which our English word “baptize” is derived, does not necessarily mean to immerse, but to apply water or to wash. It is so used in the Gospel of St. Mark (7:4) where it says that the Pharisees, when they came from market, would not eat unless they washed (Greek baptized). In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul uses the same word in the sense of sprinkling, when he refers to the sprinkling of spray upon the Israelites while they passed through the Red Sea under the guidance of Moses. (1 Cor. 10:2)

How the Apostles Baptized

In the case of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:33) and the three thousand persons who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:41) baptism by immersion was extremely unlikely if not impossible, on account of the scarcity of water for such a purpose. The jailor was baptized in the prison; and the three thousand were baptized in Jerusalem, with no stream of any depth nearer than the Jordan, miles away. Though we are not informed by the Bible what mode of baptism was pursued in these cases, it is hard to see how any other but that of pouring or sprinkling could have been employed.

How Jesus was Baptized

We are not told whether Jesus was immersed in the Jordan, or whether John baptized Him by pouring water on His head. We are told that Jesus came up out of the water after He was baptized. (Matt. 3:16) But He would have

done that, just as much if He stood in the stream while John poured water on His head, as He would if He had been immersed.

Children to be Baptized

Children are to be baptized. They constitute a large and important part of the “nations” whom Christ commanded His disciples to baptize. The kingdom of God is composed of little children (Luke 18:16,17) and of those who become as little children. (Matt. 18:3) They have a right, therefore, to receive that sacrament by which we enter into the kingdom of God. Christ expressly commands that children be brought to Him; and there is no more effective way of bringing them to Him, than that which He Himself has pointed out in His command to baptize and teach all men. In Old Testament times children at the age of eight days (Phil. 3:5) were received by the rite of circumcision into the covenant made by God with Abraham; and it is unreasonable to suppose that they should be excluded from the New Testament covenant, which is entered by baptism. Peter assured the Jews, “The promise is unto you and to your children.” (Acts 2:39) And when men believed the preaching of the Gospel, the apostles baptized them and their household. (Acts 16:33)

Children Need Baptism

Though not yet guilty of conscious and actual transgressions, infants are by nature sinful.²⁴ The germs of sin are in them. And if the children live to grow up, those germs will develop into sinful deeds. Children often die in infancy; and death is the result of sin. (Rom. 5:12) If, therefore, they are to enter the kingdom of God, they also must be born again. (John 3:3) Doubtless the Holy Spirit can implant a new spiritual life in children without the use of external means. But since baptism is a washing of regeneration, we have no right to deprive them of that sacrament which is the ordinary way in which the Holy Spirit produces the new birth (John 3:5; Tit. 3:5) within them.

Faith Necessary

Not all who are baptized will be saved, but only those who believe and are baptized. Those who believe not are lost. (Mark 16:16) God receives us into His covenant and adopts us as His children in Holy Baptism. But as disobedient and rebellious children are disinherited by earthly parents, so our heavenly Father disinherits those baptized persons who live in impenitence and unbelief. They lose that eternal and glorious inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4) which would have been theirs, if they had remained faithful.

Baptism Permanent

Baptism once properly administered is not to be repeated. It is permanent. It is a covenant between God and man. Though man is often unfaithful to his part of the covenant, God never is. His promises are all yea and Amen. (2 Cor. 1:20) The unbelief of men does not make the promise of God of none effect. (Rom. 3:3) Baptized persons who are lost perish, not because of any change in God, but because of the change in themselves. God's covenant stands. All who comply with its conditions receive its benefits; those who do not, lose them. Yet if these latter come back to God in true repentance, they are received by God and reinstated in their baptismal privileges. They need not be baptized again; the old baptism stands. The rebellious son who repents and is forgiven needs not to be adopted again as a son. His reception and forgiveness by his father are all that are necessary to re-instate him in the privileges of sonship. (Luke 15:11-24)

Confirmation

The rite of confirmation is intimately associated with the baptism of children. When those who were baptized in infancy have arrived at an age at which they are able to examine themselves, they are to be confirmed. After receiving from the pastor the further instruction which they need, they make a public confession of the faith in which they were baptized, — a confession involving not merely a recitation of the Creed believed in by the Church, but a declaration of trust in God and His Word such as is taught in the explanation of the Creed in the Catechism. The minister then lays his hand on the head of each, while he and the congregation pray that God may

give His Holy Spirit to each severally to keep him in the true faith and to make him grow in holiness. Those who are thus confirmed are admitted to the Lord's Supper. They were already members of the Church by virtue of their baptism; but having been confirmed, they become communicant members.

While there is no command in the Scriptures for the rite of confirmation, it is a useful ordinance of the Church and is in strict harmony with the spirit of the Bible. Christ has commanded that those who are baptized shall be taught all things whatsoever He has commanded; and He has said that those who want Him to confess them before His heavenly Father must confess Him before men. Confirmation is in line with both these commands of Christ; for it is preceded by a thorough instruction in the teachings of Christ, and involves a public confession of His name.

23. The Lord's Supper.

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:23-25; Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19,20) Thus our Saviour instituted the Lord's Supper or the Sacrament of the Altar.

What the Lord's Supper Is

In, with and under the bread and wine which are used in the Lord's Supper, Christ gives the communicant His body and blood. For He says, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you," and "Drink ye all of it; this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:26-28)

The Earthly Elements

Bread and wine are used in the Lord's Supper, because these are the earthly elements which Christ used when He instituted this sacrament. It is unlawful to substitute anything else in' the place of either. The wafer so frequently used in Lutheran churches is unleavened bread. The Lord Himself used that kind; for He instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the Jewish passover, (Luke 22:1) when the Jews were forbidden to eat any other than unleavened bread.

What is Given Through Them

Bread and wine are not all that is given in the Lord's Supper. They are not mere symbols of spiritual things; nor are they to be partaken of simply in order to bring Christ to our remembrance, though this is one purpose of the sacrament. (1 Cor. 11:26) The bread does not simply represent the body of Christ, nor the wine simply represent the blood of Christ. But they are the earthly elements through which in some way, mysterious yet real, the true body and blood of Christ are received by the communicant.

There is no transubstantiation; that is, the bread is not turned into the body of Christ nor the wine into the blood of Christ. The bread and wine remain real bread and wine throughout the administration of the sacrament. (1 Cor. 11:28) Their substance remains unchanged. But there is a communion of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, (1 Cor. 10:16) so that when the communicant receives the former he receives the latter also. This communion is not a consubstantiation or combination of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ in such a manner as to form a third substance different from both. But the bread and wine become the vehicles through which the heavenly gift of Christ's body and blood, which were given and shed for us for the remission of sins, are communicated to us. (1 Cor. 11:28,29) It is this that makes the Lord's Supper a means of grace.

A Mystery

The Lord's Supper is indeed a great mystery, just as many other teachings of the Bible are mysteries to us. But it is the part of faith to accept the teaching of Christ and His word, even when, like Nicodemus, we do not understand how such things can be. (John 3:9) We must not, like some of Christ's disciples, turn from Him, (John 6:66) because some of His teachings are beyond our human comprehension.

Its Object

The object of the Lord's Supper is to give us the firm assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, and thus to comfort our souls and strengthen our faith. It does this, because the body and blood of Christ received in the sacrament are the "body which was given for us and the blood which was shed for us for the remission of sins." If they are received in faith, they confer upon the communicant all the blessings which Christ secured by His sufferings and death. This sacrament is of special comfort, because each individually receives the bread and wine, and thus each individually receives also the assurance that the body of Christ was given and the blood of Christ shed for him.

How to be Received

Those who come to the Lord's Supper must examine themselves beforehand, (1 Cor. 11:28) and prepare themselves to partake of it worthily. Both the believing and the unbelieving communicants receive the body and blood of Christ. But the unbelieving receive only a curse from it; for "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. 11:29) Just as men fail to receive a blessing, and receive instead only a deeper condemnation, if they do not believe the Word of God in which Christ comes to them; so they receive all the deeper condemnation also, if they do not believingly receive Christ when He comes to them in the Lord's Supper. Only he who comes to the Lord's Supper with penitent and believing heart, mourning over his sins, desiring forgiveness, and trusting in the grace of God in Christ, receives the blessings which the Saviour desires to bestow.

Its Names

This sacrament is called the Lord's Supper, because it was instituted by the Lord, and was first held at a time when the apostles were eating their supper. It is called the Sacrament of the Altar, because from the earliest times it was celebrated at the altar. It is called the Table of the Lord, because the Lord here gives us food and drink for our souls. It is called the Communion, because it is a communion of the bread and wine with the

body and blood of Christ, a communion of believers with Christ, and a communion of believers with one another. (1 Cor. 10:16,17) It is sometimes called also the Eucharist, a name derived from a Greek word meaning to give thanks, because the administration of the sacrament is attended with thanksgiving.

The Confessional Service

The administration of the Lord's Supper is preceded by a service of confession and absolution. This service is held, in order that those who desire to come to the Lord's Table may be prepared to come worthily. At this service they make public confession of their sins, of their faith in Christ, and of their determination by the grace of God to lead a holy life. And the minister, using the Power of the Keys conferred by Christ upon the Church when He says, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," (John 20:22) pronounces the absolution upon them. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, he declares the forgiveness of their sins to all those who truly repent and believe in Christ, and the retention of their sins to all those who are impenitent and unbelieving.

24. The Death Of The Body And Its Resurrection On The Last Day.

Excepting those who shall be alive at the second coming of Christ, (1 Cor. 15:51) all men must die. (Ps. 90:10) The body shall return to the earth from which it was taken, and the soul shall go forth into eternity. (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 12:7) But on the last day the body shall be raised to life again and reunited with the soul forever.

Why Men Die

If men were not sinful, they would not have to die; their bodies as well as their souls would be immortal. But when sin entered the world, death entered with it. Death is the penalty of sin. (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23) And it comes upon all, because all are guilty. “As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, because all men have sinned” (Rom. 5:12) For this reason “it is appointed unto men once to die.” (Heb. 9:27)

How and When

No one knows how long he will live. No one can tell at what moment or in what manner he will die. (Jas. 4:13-15) He may be called away while he is young, or be permitted to spend many years on earth. He may die suddenly, or receive long previous warning of the approaching end. He may die through accident or disease. Die he surely will; but God alone knows when and how. (Eccl. 9:12) We ought therefore to live in constant repentance and

faith, that death may not come to us and find us unprepared to appear before God.

Our Days Numbered

Man's days on earth are numbered. (Ps. 90:12) There is a limit set, beyond which he cannot pass. When that number is complete, he must die. All his efforts and those of his fellow-men cannot make him live a minute longer. (Eccl. 8:8) But while men cannot live beyond their allotted time, they may and often do shorten their life. Through failure to take proper care of their body, by breaking the laws of health, and by a course of wickedness and dissipation, many people scarcely live out half their days. (Ps. 55:23)

The Terrors of Death

Men shrink from death and avoid it as long as possible. For impenitent persons it is an object of unalloyed dread. It puts an end to all their hopes and joys. They live only for this world, and therefore death robs them of all that is dear to them. It sends them, forth into eternity unprepared, and doomed to everlasting woe and despair.

Its Terrors Lost for the Christian

For the believer death has lost its terrors. Even the Christian may shrink from death through the weakness of the flesh. Death is an unnatural thing. It was not meant by God to come upon men. It came as the result and penalty of sin. But the believer does not fear death as the unbeliever does. Christ has robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory. (1 Cor. 15:55-57) He has brought life and immortality to light. (2 Tim. 1:10) Death is really the Christian's friend, because it is the portal through which he escapes from a world of sin and sorrow and enters upon his eternal inheritance in heaven. (1 Pet. 1:4) For this reason the death of believers is spoken of in terms that lack all ideas of terror. They are gathered to their people,

(Gen. 25:8) they are taken away from the evil to come, (Is. 57:1) they fall asleep in Christ. (1 Thess. 4:13,14)

Why Believers Also Must Die

Christ has delivered the Christians from spiritual and eternal death, but not from bodily death. Their bodies are mortal as well as those of the unbelievers. Death in their case is, however, no longer to be regarded as a punishment for their sins. Christ has taken away all their punishment. But their body must undergo a complete change before it can be fit to enter heaven. It is an earthly, sinful body. It must be made a spiritual body. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (1 Cor. 15:50) The body must die and decay, in order that it may be raised from the dead transformed and glorified. (1 Cor. 15:35-38) Just as the soul must be changed by the new birth before it can be fitted for entrance into heaven, so a similar change must take place in the body. The soul, having been born again in this world, enters upon its rest at once after death. (Luke 23:43) But the body must die and decay in the earth, in order that from it as a seed or germ God may raise up at the last day an incorruptible, sinless, perfect and glorious body. (1 Cor. 15:42-44) This is the reason why those who are alive at Christ's second coming shall be changed. They shall not die; but the same change which has taken place in the others through death and the resurrection shall take place in them in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. (1 Cor. 15:51-53)

The Resurrection of the Body

The separation which takes place between the body and soul at death is not permanent. The body shall be raised from the dead on the last day and reunited to the soul from which it was parted. There shall be a "resurrection both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15) "The time is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." (John 5:28) Believers and unbelievers shall indeed be raised for a different purpose, but they shall all be raised. (John 5:29) In the case of the believers it will be a

resurrection unto life; in that of the unbelievers, a resurrection unto damnation. The dead in Christ shall rise first. (1 Thess. 4:16)

The Body

The resurrection will be the raising of the bodies that are in the graves, (John 5:28) and not the creation of a new body. It will be essentially the same body which we had here on earth. But a great change will take place in it, even in the case of the unbelievers, and especially in that of the believers. Here the bodies of all men are mortal and corruptible. There they shall be immortal and incorruptible. (1 Cor. 15:42) This is true of the unbelievers also. For their body as well as their soul shall be punished eternally, (Matt. 10:28) and must therefore exist eternally.

But a far greater change shall take place in the believers. Their body shall not only be immortal and incorruptible, but shall be endowed with new and glorious properties. (1 Cor. 15:43,44) It shall be wholly freed from all the infirmities, imperfections and limitations to which it has been subject here on earth. It shall be a spiritual body like that of the Saviour after His resurrection. For Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. (Phil. 3:21) As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Cor. 15:40) The body of the believer shall be made a fit tabernacle for the soul that shall inhabit it for all eternity.

25. Jesus Will Come Again To Judge The Living And The Dead.

The same Lord whom the apostles saw ascending into heaven from Mount Olivet shall come again in like manner as they saw Him go. (Acts 1:11) He shall come in glory and majesty to judge the living and the dead. (Matt. 24:30) He will take the believers unto Himself, but will cast the unbelievers out from His presence forever.

When He Will Come

The second coming of Jesus is certain. (Luke 21:33) But the time of His coming no man knows. Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels, but God only. (Matt. 24:36) Even Christ Himself in His state of humiliation withheld from Himself the knowledge of that day. (Mark 13:32) It shall come upon men unawares, like a thief in the night (Matt. 24:42-44 1 Thess. 5:2) and like the flood in the days of Noah. (Matt. 24:37) "Like a snare it shall come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke 21:35) It shall find men eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, with no thought of the coming of Christ and the final judgment. (Matt. 24:38,39) Because the Saviour delays His coming, many scornfully ask, "Where is the promise of His coming; for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" (2 Pet. 3:4) But He delays His coming, in order that men may have opportunity to repent and be saved. (2 Pet. 3:9) What seems a long time to men is not long to God. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8) When the proper time has arrived, Christ will come.

No One Can Compute the Time

It is not possible to compute the date of Christ's second coming by means of arithmetical calculations from numbers mentioned in Old Testament prophecies or the book of Revelation, or from the chronology given in the margin of the Bible. That chronology is not inspired; it is not a part of the Bible. It is a careful but not infallible attempt to fix the date of Biblical events, and was placed in the Bible only a few hundred years ago as a matter of convenience to the reader. Books or pamphlets which profess to be able to calculate the date of the end of the world can only mislead, and are therefore to be shunned. The time of Christ's coming is meant to remain unknown to men; (Matt. 24:42,44) He will come when least expected, and not at the date on which men have calculated that He ought to come.

Signs of His Coming

The second coming of Christ shall be preceded by signs. The Gospel shall first be preached throughout the entire world, (Matt. 24:14) and the Jews shall be converted to Christ. (Rom. 11:25,26) There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, (Luke 21:25) deceivers and wicked men shall wax worse and worse," wars and tumults shall increase, the godly shall suffer intense persecution, (Matt. 24:9) and Anti-Christ, the man of sin and the human personification of wickedness and opposition to Christ, shall be revealed. (2 Thess. 2:3,4; 1 John 2:18) Though these signs do not enable the believer to tell the day and the hour of Christ's coming, they serve to warn him of its nearness, and teach him to guard himself against worldly security so that he may be always ready. (Luke 21:34,36)

How He Will Come

The first time Jesus came to earth, He came in lowliness and humility; He came to suffer and die for men's sins. But when He comes again, it will be to judge the world. He shall come in the clouds with power and great glory, accompanied by all the holy angels. (Matt. 25:31)

How Regarded by Men

The coming of Christ shall fill the wicked with terror and dismay. Those who during their lifetime lived in defiance of God, and spurned the offers of His grace, shall then cry out to the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the day of His wrath shall have come, and they shall not be able to stand (Rev. 6:16,17) in His presence.

The believers on the other hand shall be filled with joy, because their redemption from all the evils of this world (Luke 21:28) and their entrance on their eternal inheritance is at hand. For them Christ shall come in love and not in wrath. He shall come to receive them unto Himself forever. (1 Thess. 4:17)

The Judgment

When Christ has come, all men shall be brought before His throne to judgment. (Matt. 25:32) For “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5:10) The dead shall be raised from their graves, or from the depths of the sea, or wherever their bodies may lie; and they, together with all who are alive at Christ’s coming, shall be gathered before Him. Believers and unbelievers, great and small, from every nation and clime, shall be summoned there to give an account of their life upon earth.

The Account

Every thing that men have done shall then be made manifest; every secret thing shall be revealed. (1 Cor. 3:13; 1 Cor. 4:5) Men shall be asked to give an account of all that they have done on the earth, even of every idle word that they have spoken. (Matt. 12:36) And the judgment shall be according to what men have done. (2 Cor. 5:10) Christ will render to every man according to his deeds, bestowing eternal life upon all who by patient

continuance in well-doing have sought for glory, honor and immortality, but pouring out indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil. (Rom. 2:6,9) He shall reward every man according to his works. (Matt. 16:27)

Both believers and unbelievers shall be found to deserve eternal death by their sins. (Ps. 143:2) But the believers shall be justified by their faith in Christ. His righteousness shall cover up all their shortcomings, and shall be counted as if it belonged to them. (Matt. 22:11-13) They shall, therefore, escape the punishment which they have deserved by their sins; but the unbelieving, having nothing to plead, shall be sentenced to eternal death. (Matt. 22:11-13)

The Separation

Christ shall separate the believers from the unbelievers, and place the believers upon His right hand and the unbelievers upon His left. Then shall He say to those on His right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And He shall say this to them, because they have shown by their works that they believe on Him. Then will He also say to those on His left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." He will condemn them, because they have shown by their deeds that they are impenitent and unbelieving. "These shall then go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:31-46)

The End of the World. (Matt. 24:3)

With the coming of Christ to judgment, the present order of the world will come to an end. (1 Cor. 7:31) "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. 5:10) For this reason the day of Christ's coming is called The Last Day. (John 6:39) The earth itself has been contaminated by sin; it has been accursed for man's sake (Gen. 3:17) and has become a home of disease and death. It is therefore reserved unto fire against the day of judgment (2 Pet. 3:7) either to be

annihilated or to be so completely purified and changed as to become a new earth. The whole creation is to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8:21-23) There shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Pet. 3:13)

26. The Eternal Destiny Of Believers And Unbelievers.

One of two destinies (John 5:29) lies before every human being in the world to come. He will enter either upon eternal life in heaven or eternal death in hell. Which it shall be depends on the manner in which he conducts himself in this world toward the grace of God in Christ. The believers shall be saved; the unbelievers, lost. (Mark 16:16)

Men Shape Their Own Destiny

While it is true that all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and have no power of their own to save themselves, it is also true that God has provided salvation for all men, (1 John 4:14) and through the Word of God gives them power to accept it. They may use this power and be saved by faith; or they may refuse to use it, and thus remain lost in their sins. In a very true sense, then, the shaping of his eternal destiny is in man's own hands. He will reap what he sows. (Gal. 6:7) "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:8) When, on the day of judgment, the final and eternal destiny of men is decided by Christ, they shall be assigned to an eternity of joy or of woe according as their life in this world has shown the presence or absence of true and living faith. (Matt. 25:34-45)

Hell

The impenitent and unbelieving shall spend their eternity in hell. They shall suffer eternal punishment in body and soul. Hell is not a mere fancy of man's brain, but a dreadful reality. It is attested by the plain words of

Scripture. It is the place into which the wicked angels have been cast, (2 Pet. 2:4) and into which the impenitent and unbelieving among men shall be cast also. (Matt. 25:41) The rich man in the parable, who had not lived a life of faith, but had been lacking in love to God and his fellow-men and had left Lazarus lie unaided at his gate, awoke in hell and in torments and begged in vain for a single drop of water to cool his burning tongue. (Luke 16:24)

The Torments of Hell

The pain and misery of the lost is variously described in the Scriptures. They shall be cast into a furnace of fire. (Matt. 13:50) They shall be tormented by the worm that never dieth and the fire that never is quenched. (Mark 9:44) They shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 8:12; 22:13) Their own conscience shall perpetually upbraid them for their wickedness and folly in disobeying God and in refusing to accept the salvation which He so mercifully offered them. They shall be filled continually with remorse, despair and helpless rage. They shall be consumed by the fire of their own evil lusts, but be unable to gratify them. In absolute darkness and in total exclusion from God and from all that is good, they shall spend their eternity in ceaseless woe, in the company of the most wicked of men and of devils.

Degrees of Punishment

The pains of hell will, indeed, differ in degree according to the measure of men's wickedness. (Luke 12:47,48; Matt. 11:24) The greater their iniquity and the greater the opportunities for salvation which they have despised, the deeper will be their remorse and anguish. But the sufferings of all the lost will be great beyond human power of expression, and beyond all the possible sufferings of this world. They shall be completely and forever forsaken by God, and excluded from every possibility of the enjoyment of any good. (Matt. 25:11-12) They shall be given over to the power and consequences of the sins from which they refused to be separated here.

Punishment Eternal

The punishment of the lost will never end. (Matt. 25:46) The smoke of their torment shall ascend forever. (Rev. 14:11) God will not place them in hell for a season and then take them out of it. He will leave them there. Men must be fitted for heaven by the operation of God's grace in their hearts. If they have spurned that grace in this world, they will have to bear the consequence of their folly in the next. Those who want to escape from the punishment of the next world must do so now. then they are once condemned to hell it will be too late. Between heaven and hell there is a gulf fixed, so that those who would pass from one side to the other cannot do so. (Luke 16:26)

Heaven

The believers shall have everlasting life, (John 3:16) and shall dwell forever with the Lord in heaven. (1 Thess. 4:17) They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, (Matt. 25:34) and inhabit the heavenly mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for them. (John 14:2,3) Their inheritance shall be one that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 1:4)

Degrees of Glory

All the believers shall enter upon an eternal inheritance in heaven. But the inheritance of all shall not be equally glorious. There shall be differences in glory, proportioned to the strength of their faith, the extent of their sufferings, and the zeal which they manifested in the service of Christ on earth. As one star differs from another star in glory, and the sun and the moon outshine them all, so there shall be differences in glory in those who are saved, (1 Cor. 15:41,42) — differences proportioned to the faithfulness which they have shown in those things with which Christ has entrusted them here. (Luke 19:17-19) But while there will be differences of glory, all those who are saved shall be perfectly happy, just as the angels, though differing in rank, find perfect happiness in God's presence.

The Happiness of Heaven

The bliss of heaven is so exalted, that we cannot form any adequate conception of it in this world. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9) St. Paul saw some of the glories of heaven in a trance; but he could not and dared not describe them. (2 Cor. 12:2-4) We shall be able to comprehend and appreciate them only after we have entered upon their enjoyment.

Freedom from Every Evil

While the happiness of heaven cannot be adequately described in the language of earth, the Bible nevertheless gives us some idea of the blessedness which there awaits the believers. They shall be freed from all annoyances, pains and sorrows. They shall neither hunger nor thirst; (Rev. 7:16) they shall not suffer from heat or cold. They shall have perfect rest (Heb. 4:9) and freedom from every ill of body and soul. (Rev. 14:13) The conflict against sin which continued throughout their life-time upon earth shall be over. They shall have won the victory and received the reward. (Rev. 3:12) There: shall be no more sin in them, and they shall suffer no more consequences of sin. " God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4)

Dwelling in God's Presence

The believers shall dwell forever in the light of God's presence, enjoy His love, and find in His service perfect and uninterrupted happiness. Freed from every vestige of sin, perfect in body and soul, (Phil. 3:21) they shall share in the glory of Christ, (John 17:24; Col. 3:4) and live and reign with Him forever. All that was dark to them here on earth shall then become light? (1 Cor. 13:9,10,12) They shall see that all God's dealings with them in this world, however mysterious at the time, were prompted by His love

and were needful in order to bring them to heaven at last. They shall regard all their earthly sufferings as unworthy to be compared with the glory that is then revealed in them. (Rom. 8:18) They shall learn more and more how great, how infinite is God's love. And in the company of the good angels and glorified men they shall never weary of serving Him (Rev. 7:15) and singing His glorious praise. (Rev. 15:3)

The Heavenly City

In the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation, St. John describes the glory of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, whose walls are of jasper, set with precious stones, whose gates are of pearl, and whose streets are of gold. (Rev. 21:18-21) The city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God lightens it and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Rev. 18:23) It is a city of endless day; for "there shall be no night there." (Rev. 18:25) The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face. (Rev. 22:3,4)

27. The Christian Law Of Life.

In the first half of this book we considered what the Bible teaches concerning God and the way of salvation. Let us now see what it teaches concerning the character and conduct of the Christian.

Living According to God's Will

Our life should be regulated entirely by God's will. (Col. 1:9,10) We should do, not what our natural inclinations prompt us to do, but what God desires that we should do. (1 Pet. 4:2,3) If we are true Christians, we desire to do the will of God in all things. (Eph. 6:6; 1 John 3:3) For a Christian is one who is penitent and believing. This means, that he is sorry for his sins and is desirous of doing right; that he has been forgiven for past transgressions and is anxious to avoid future wrongdoing.

The Moral Law

In the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) in the Old Testament and in the teaching (Heb. 1:1,2) and example of Christ (1 John 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:21) in the New Testament, God has given us the moral law which shall be our guide in living according to His will. The substance of that law is love to God and man. We are to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:37-39) In these two commandments all the other commandments of the Bible are included.⁸ They are the law of love. And this law we are to obey in all our thoughts and words and deeds. As Christ was filled with love to God and man, and did everything in love, so we are to do also.

The Law in Us

This law of God is the same for all men, believers and unbelievers. But for the unbelievers it is a law outside of them, demanding obedience on pain of punishment; (ex. 20:5(?)) while for the believers it is a law to which their own mind has been made to correspond by the grace of God, and which has, therefore, become a part of themselves. For when the Holy Spirit produces faith in the heart, He also produces love to God and a desire to do His will. (Phil. 2:13) Believers are free from the law, (Gal. 5:1) not in the sense of being at liberty to sin, (1 Pet. 2:16) but in the sense of being free from the outward compulsion of the law, because the love of Christ constrains (2 Cor. 5:14) them to do God's will of their own accord. The more we receive Christ into our hearts by faith, the more completely the law of God becomes a part of ourselves. (Eph. 3:16-19; Gal. 2:20)

Religion and Morality

Religion and morality must always go together, if they are to be true. Neither of them by itself is pleasing to God. In fact, in their true sense neither can exist alone. If those who believe in Christ do not lead a holy life, their faith is dead (Jas. 2:17) and their pretense of religion a hollow mockery. (Matt. 1:22,23) And on the other hand, if those who lead an outwardly moral life do not have faith, they are not keeping the law in God's sight at all, because they have no love for Him. A right life is the superstructure which we erect upon the foundation of our religion. (1 Cor. 3:11) Morality without religion is like a house without a solid foundation on which to rest. (Matt. 7:26,27) Many unbelieving persons lead outwardly moral lives; but they do not do so out of love to God, but out of love for themselves. Consequently their morality is not acceptable to God.

Obedience

Our first concern should be to believe in Christ and have a right state of heart toward God; then the right life will follow as a matter of course. We should seek to be penitent, believing, loving children of our heavenly

Father. Then our life will be one of willing and cheerful obedience to Him, — an obedience that will be acceptable to Him because it springs from love. Obedience from fear is slavery. Obedience from love is delightful freedom.

Avoiding Gross Sins

No one can be a Christian and still live in gross sin against the moral law. (Rom. 6:2) “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” (Eph. 5:5) Those who lead immoral lives are not penitent, and therefore are not Christians. Repentance involves the leaving and hating of such sins. When Zaccheus repented, he restored fourfold to those whom he had robbed, (Luke 19:8) and thenceforth lived honestly. When those who came out to hear John the Baptist preach were converted, John told them that they must leave the sins to which they had been addicted. (Luke 3:9-14) A Christian dare not live in sin. If he does he forfeits the grace of God and falls into condemnation.

Doing the Right

Our life is not, however, to be one of mere negative goodness. We are not only to avoid evil, but to live a life of positive righteousness. A good man is not one who simply is not a bad man; but he is one who has a right state of heart and does good deeds. We are to do our duty toward God and man as we find that duty enjoined in God’s Word and enforced by our conscience. We should do everything that the law of love bids us do. Love to God above all things, and love to other objects and things according to the relation in which they stand to Him, — this should be the constant attitude of our hearts and the motive of all our actions. In all the relations of life, in the family and home, in the Church, in the State, and in our dealings with men in general, this effort to do only the right and to live and act in love toward all should be our distinguishing characteristic. It is not sufficient to say to Christ, “Lord, Lord;” we must do the will of His Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21)

The Reward of Well-Doing

A life of obedience to God will involve on our part a constant conflict against the powers of evil, and many a victory over the promptings of our selfish heart, the world and the devil. It will require a daily denial of self and taking up of our cross to follow Jesus. (Luke 9:23) But we are not to grow weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. (Gal. 6:9) There is a reward in store for the godly, — a reward of grace, indeed, and not of merit, but a reward nevertheless. They shall be rewarded for all the sufferings which they endure for the sake of the Gospel; (Matt. 5:11,12) for loving their enemies and doing good without looking for a return, (Luke 6:35) and even for so small a matter as the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. (Matt. 10:42) Christ will reward them on the day of Judgment according to what they have done in love for Him. For the presence of this love in them proves that they are His disciples. (John 13:35)

28. Love To God.

We should love God above all things, with all our heart and soul and mind. (Matt. 22:37) This does not mean that we should not or dare not love anyone or anything else; for we are expressly commanded to love our fellow men as we love ourselves. (Matt. 22:39) But it means that all other love shall be made secondary and subordinate to the love of God. Our relation to all other objects should be determined by the relation in which those objects stand to Him. We should love what He loves and hate what He hates. As He loves the sinner (John 3:18) but hates the sinner's sin, (Hab. 1:13) so are we to do also. This was the love which Christ had to God; and He is our example.

God Above All

There is nothing else in all the universe to be compared with God in goodness and perfection. (Is. 46:9) He is therefore to be the chief and highest object of our love. To love anything more than God is to make an idol of it by putting it in the place that belongs to Him. Many people thus make an idol of themselves, of other people, or of the things of this world.

A Result of God's Love to Us

We should love God, because He first loved us.⁶ The earthly benefits which He showers upon us day by day (1 John 4:19) the spiritual blessings which have become ours through Christ (Eph. 1:3) are all the gifts of His love. It is in the nature of love to cause love; and it always will, if its effects be not willfully resisted. God's love to us should therefore produce love in return. And it does in all those who believe in Christ. (1 Pet. 1:8) The more we

realize through faith His goodness toward us, the deeper our love for Him becomes.

He is Our Father

Through Christ we have been adopted as children of God, (Gal. 4:5,6) and are taught to address Him as our Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 6:9) As a child loves his earthly father, because his father loves him, cares for him, and protects him; so we are to love God. We are, indeed, to love Him far more; for no earthly father loves his children as much as God loves us, or is as worthy of love as God is. For this reason our love to God is to be greater even than that which we owe to our earthly parents. (Matt. 10:37)

Promises to Those Who Love God

Christ takes it for granted that those who believe in Him will love Him. Therefore He tested the sincerity of Peter's repentance by inquiring whether Peter loved Him. (John 21:15,16) For this reason also, the promises of salvation, which are usually given to those who believe, are in some passages of Scripture given to those who love God. Thus we are told that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9) The promise is made to them, because those who believe in Christ and through Him realize the greatness of God's love will inevitably love God in return. Faith and love always go together. "Faith worketh by love." (Gal. 5:6) The stronger the faith, the greater the love.

How Love to God is Manifested

"By their fruits ye shall know them," (Matt. 7:20) says Christ. Our life will show whether we love God or not. Our love to Him should be manifested by obedience to His commands (1 John 5:3) and a willingness to suffer all things for His sake. (Matt. 10:38) It should be shown by love for the things of God. We should love His Church and the preaching of the Gospel. (John

8:47) If we do not love His Word, we do not love Him. It is also manifested by our manner of dealing with our fellow-men. If we love God, we will love them also. We are to love one another, even as Christ also loved us. (John 13:34) Our love to our fellow-men is to be a proof of our love to God. “If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from Him, that he that loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:20,21)

Fear and Love

As Christians we are to fear God, (Rom. 11:20; Eph. 5:21) but not with a fear such as the slave feels for his master, or such as the unbeliever feels when he thinks of the wrath of God that is hanging over him. We are children of God by faith, (Rom. 8:15) and our fear of Him is to be a child-like fear — a fear mingled with love and trust. Perfect love casteth out all slavish fear and terror. (1 John 4:18) Those who have no love for God and do not seek to do His will have, indeed, every reason to fear and dread His wrath. (Rom. 2:4,5) But those who believe need have no such fear. They are reconciled to God through Christ, their sins are forgiven, and they are sure of His love and favor.

Love Prompts to Obedience

Love to God will fill us with an obedient spirit. (2 John 6) Love is not self-centered, (1 Cor. 13:5) but concerned for the good will and pleasure of the person that is loved. A loving child is an obedient one. If we love God as we should, we will try to please Him in all things. We will forget self and all our selfish wishes in our desire to do His will. Unless there be obedience to God there is no love for Him. (John 14:24) We place no confidence in the protestations of those who say they love us and who yet manifest no desire to please us. The child who refuses to obey his parents or obeys unwillingly and with grumbling has no right love for them. We cannot love God and at the same time deliberately do those things which He has forbidden, and which we know will displease Him.

Love Makes Obedience Easy

Love lightens toil. "That we do for those whom we love is never a hardship. No matter how difficult it is, we do it cheerfully and gladly for their sakes. To those who love God His commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:3) To the worldly and unbelieving nothing seems harder and more unpleasant than obedience to the commands of the Saviour. They find their happiness in the love of the world and its sins; and they cannot conceive how anyone can be happy, if he denies himself these things and lives in accordance with the requirements of the Christian religion. But one who loves God does not find obedience to His commandments a hardship. Love makes obedience easy. If we love God, we will delight to do His will, and be filled with sorrow whenever we fail to do it as we ought. Love to the Saviour makes His yoke easy and His burden light. (Matt. 11:30) If we find that obedience to the will of God is distasteful and burdensome, the fault lies in our lack of love to Him. We ought to meditate much upon all that God has done and does for us, so that our love for Him may increase. Then will the doing of His will be a joy and not a burden to us.

The Apostles

The life of the apostles furnishes a striking illustration of what a Christian's love to God involves and means. We are told of the twelve, that they forsook all and followed Jesus. (Luke 5:11; Matt. 19:27) They sacrificed their property, their ease and their comfort, in order to be with Him while He was on earth; and after His ascension into heaven they spent their whole life in His service, and suffered all manner of hardships and persecutions for His sake. They counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ their Lord. (Phil. 3:8) The length to which the Christian's love to God can go is seen most fully in the labors and sufferings of St. Paul for the Gospel. (2 Cor. 11:23-28)

Christ Our Example

Even the love of the apostles was not perfect; for no mere man can be perfect. But the love of Christ to His Father (John 4:34) was perfect and flawless. He is our example. His holy and sinless life, His absolute obedience to God's will, was the result of His love. He loved God above all things. His heavenly Father was all in all to Him. He never sought to do His own will and pleasure, but the will of His Father," and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8) As He loved God, so we should love Him also. We should forget self, be willing to give up all things, even life itself, and still count ourselves rich in possessing God. (Ps. 73:25,26)

29. Humility.

The human heart is not naturally inclined to be humble either toward God or man. It is a proud and rebellious heart, defiant toward God (Ps. 10:4) and anxious to be honored and served by men. (Matt. 20:25) Humility is a virtue for which the ancients had not even a name. But Christ has made it to be a virtue of the first rank. Without humility no one can be a Christian.

Christ was Humble

As in all other respects, so in this, Christ is our example. He was meek and lowly in heart, and we are to be like Him. (Matt. 11:29) When he came to earth, He voluntarily laid aside His glory and splendor, and walked among men in lowliness and humility. Though He was the Son of God from all eternity, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:6-8) There was in Him no sin or shortcoming (John 8:46) which could demand of Him to be humble. But He voluntarily humbled Himself for our sakes, in order that He might work out our redemption, and might give us an example of humility. (1 Pet. 2:21)

Toward God and Man

Toward God, Christ manifested His humility in His complete subordination of Himself to His heavenly Father and His willingness to do and endure all things which seemed best in His Father's sight. (Matt. 26:39) Toward men, He manifested His humility in His daily behavior toward them, in His forgetfulness of self while He used every opportunity to serve even the lowest among them, and in the patience and meekness with which He bore the scorn and abuse of His enemies.

We are to be Humble

Christ was humble for our sakes; we have need to be humble for our own. And we will be humble, if we realize as we should the greatness of God and our own insignificance. God is infinite in power and holiness; we are weak, unworthy and sinful creatures. We are therefore to humble ourselves before Him. (Jas. 4:10)

What Humility Is

To be humble means to acknowledge our weakness and unworthiness in God's sight and our constant dependence on Him; and to ascribe all the good that is in us, not to ourselves, but to His grace. (1 Cor. 15:10) It means, also, not to despise or look down upon our fellow-men, but in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than ourselves. (Phil. 2:3)

Its Importance

Humility lies at the base of all true religion. There can be no right relation between us and God without it. He " resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (Jas. 4:6) None can find acceptance with Him unless they have a broken and contrite, and therefore humble, heart. (Ps. 51:17) The publican in the temple, who humbly confessed his guilt and unworthiness and cast himself upon God's grace, was received into favor; but the proud Pharisee, who exalted himself before God and despised the publican who stood near him, went down to his house unjustified. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

Weakness and Strength

The humility which is thus necessary for acceptance with God is necessary throughout our life, in order that God may accomplish His purposes in us and through us. It is God who must give us both the willingness and the strength to do His will. (Phil. 2:13) And He does this only in those who

realize their own weakness and lean in humble dependence on Him. Only when we are weak are we strong; (2 Cor. 12:10) for then God supplies us with His strength. (2 Cor. 12:9) We must feel ourselves to be nothing, and then God's grace gives us strength to be useful in His service. God dwells with those who are of a humble mind. (Isa. 57:15)

This was the secret of the great work which St. Paul was enabled to do for the Gospel. He was once a proud, self-sufficient Pharisee, who persecuted the Christians. (1 Cor. 15:9) But God's grace took hold of him and made him humble; and in making him humble it made him strong, so that he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles, yet not he, but the grace of God that was with him. (1 Cor. 15:10) Weak in himself, he was yet enabled to do all things through Christ who strengthened him. (Phil. 4:13) Therefore Paul gloried in his own infirmities and in the sufferings which laid bare his weakness, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. (2 Cor. 12:9) All the talents he possessed, and all the good he did for Christ, he ascribed not to himself, but to the grace of God in him. By the grace of God he was what he was. (1 Cor. 15:10) And this is true of us all. It is God who implants the new life in us, and who keeps it alive and strengthens it. (Phil. 1:6) And the power of the divine life in us is in direct proportion to our humble dependence on God. The more we empty ourselves of self, the more room we make for Christ and His grace in us.

Humility Toward Others

If we have the proper humility toward God, that humility will be manifested in our dealings with our fellow-men. There will be an absence of everything that savors of pride, arrogance, self-importance and self-righteousness. If we are specially favored in any way in body or mind or soul, or if we happen to excel others in good looks, strength, talents, wealth, honors, success, piety, or any other blessing, we are not to look down upon them on this account, as though we were so much better than they. (Jer. 9:23,24) We cannot indeed be blind to these advantages, if we happen to possess them; but when we think of them, it should be, not with feelings of exaltation and pride in ourselves, but in humble gratitude to God to whose grace alone we owe them, and who might, if He had seen fit, have caused us to exchange positions with those whom we now excel. If we permit ourselves to become

proud and self-sufficient, Satan will resume dominion in our hearts; for God dwells only in those who are of humble mind.

Humility in Speech

Our humility is to be seen in our conversation. When we speak of ourselves or anything we have done, we are to do so without boastfulness and self-glorification. (Prov. 27:2) When we speak of others, it is to be with the respect which is due to them. We should not speak despisingly of them or of what they have done.

In Actions

We should never be arrogant in our behavior toward others (Rom. 12:16) never snub or ridicule them because they do not enjoy the same blessings or advantages as we, but always treat them with proper consideration, and “condescend to men of low estate.” We should be patient with the faults and shortcomings of others, (Eph. 4:2) not indeed making excuses for sin, but seeking to restore the fallen in a spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:1) We are not to say, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.” (Is. 65:5) But we are to remember that, if we have been kept from falling into the same sin as others, it is by the grace of God and not by our strength. We also may fall; and we certainly will fall unless God’s strength sustains us. (2 Cor. 3:5) If we are free from the particular faults which we deplore in others, we should remember that we have other faults of our own which require that our fellow-men should be patient and forbearing with us.

Pride

The world is full of pride, — full of people who will not bow themselves humbly before God, and who exalt themselves above their fellow-men. One is proud of his strength, another of his talents, another of his wealth, another of his station and rank. There is a spiritual pride, also, to which Christians are exposed, — a pride that glories in its religious attainments and good

works, as though what they have done were their own doing, and not due to the grace of God alone; a pride that thinks its own good deeds merit God's favor, instead of being only a gift of God's grace. This was the sin of the self-righteous Pharisees: they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. (Luke 18:9)

How Seen

Pride may be manifested by a look, by a gesture, by inordinate attention to the clothes we wear or the style we live in, by a tendency to gaze upon and admire our own person and features, by efforts to obtain places of honor and distinction, and in a multitude of other ways. It is shown by a stubborn insistence upon our own ideas, by a refusal to acknowledge and correct our mistakes, by a readiness to take offense at every slight provocation, and by a desire to have others bow to us and honor us.

Be Ready to Serve

The natural man desires to be served and honored by others. The Christian should take pleasure in serving even the lowest and humblest among his fellow-men. True greatness consists in humility; he that is the humblest is the greatest in the kingdom of God. (Matt. 18:4) He that is greatest should be as the youngest, and he that is chief as he that doth serve. (Luke 22:26) Our aim should be in all humility willingly and gladly to serve every one for Christ's sake as occasion demands, remembering that Christ has given us an example. For "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (Matt. 20:28) In order to enforce the lesson of humility upon His disciples, who had engaged in an unseemly contention as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom, He Himself washed their feet, thus performing an office that usually fell to the lowest servant of the household. And He tells us that we also should be ready to perform the lowest offices for others, in order to benefit them. (John 13:12-17) Our great aim should be, not to be honored and served, but to be useful in any capacity, however humble and lowly.

Humility and Leadership

A true spirit of humility is not incompatible with courage and leadership among men. On the contrary, while the Scriptures exhort us to be humble, they also exhort us to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Eph. 6:10) We are to be firm and decisive in action, bold in the defense of the truth, and if called to take upon us the responsibilities of leadership in any good cause, we are to be brave and courageous. That these qualities may be united with true humility is apparent from such examples as Moses and Joshua and David and Paul and Luther. All of them had an humble opinion of themselves; but their faith filled them with such confidence in God, that none were more bold and brave and strong in action than they.

30. Thankfulness.

Every blessing that we enjoy in body or soul is the free gift of God, (Jas. 1:17) bestowed upon us without any merit or worthiness on our part. We ought therefore to receive those blessings with truly thankful hearts, and express our gratitude both with our lips and with our lives.

God's Goodness to Us

In God we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28) He has created us; His breath has given us life. (Job 33:4) He has preserved us hitherto against the many dangers that continually beset our existence, (2 Tim. 4:18) and has provided us from day to day with the necessaries of life. (Ps. 145:16) It is He who “gives rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling us with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:17) The air we breathe, the water we drink, the health we enjoy, the innocent sources of pleasure and enjoyment, our various powers of body and mind, — these and every other blessing come from God and call for our thanks.

But a still greater reason for thankfulness is found in the spiritual blessings which God bestows upon us through His Son Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:3-6) He has given His Son into death to save us from sin and eternal destruction. (1 John 4:9) He brings His salvation home to our hearts through His holy Word. He has made all of us who believe in Christ heirs of eternal salvation, having “delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:12-14) He has adopted us as His children, (Gal. 4:6) assures us of His unfailing love and grace, and will bestow upon all who are faithful an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 1:3,4) These are blessings for which we

can never be sufficiently grateful, even if we employ all our powers and give up our life itself in the service of God.

The Example of Christ

The Saviour Himself has given us an example of the thankfulness which we should show toward God. Though He was the Son of God, yet as man He constantly acknowledged His dependence upon His heavenly Father. He gave thanks for the bread and the fish when He was about to feed the four thousand, (Matt. 15:36) and also for the bread and the wine when He was about to institute the Lord's Supper, (Matt. 26:26) thus showing that He was in the habit of giving thanks at meal-time. He thanked God for the progress which the Gospel was making through the disciples whom He had sent out to preach. (Matt. 11:25) At the raising of Lazarus He gave thanks to God for hearing His prayer. (John 11:41) And if Jesus, who was the Son of God, acknowledged with thankfulness His obligations to God, surely we, who are nothing but sinful human beings, ought to do the same.

We Should be Thankful

When we show kindness to others, we are grieved and disappointed if they are not thankful. Kindness deserves recognition and thanks. Ingratitude of man to man is universally regarded as one of the meanest of vices. Still more mean and disgraceful is the ingratitude of men for the unnumbered mercies and kindnesses of God. God looks for thankfulness. He is grieved when we do not show it. When the Saviour healed the ten men who were lepers and only one returned to give thanks, He sorrowfully asked, "Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17)

Christians are exhorted to give thanks to God for all things. (Eph. 5:20) And the apostles themselves give us an example of thankfulness. They begin nearly all their epistles with an expression of gratitude to God, and they frequently break out into thanksgiving in the course of their epistles. Thankfulness for God's goodness is inseparable from a right state of heart toward God. The godly have always been thankful. The Psalms of the Old Testament are the religious expression of the sentiments of the pious Jews,

and they are permeated with a spirit of thankfulness. They abound in expressions such as this: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever," (Ps. 118:1) Psalms of thanksgiving and praise form one of the three classes into which the Psalms as a whole may be divided. The redeemed in heaven and the angels are continually giving praise to God. (Rev. 5:9-14) And assuredly those who hope one day to join in that song of thanksgiving and praise around the throne of God should begin here upon earth to acknowledge and praise His goodness.

Giving Thanks Always

We are to give God thanks always and for all things. (Eph. 5:20) "Then God does not send us what we desire, we are not to overlook those things which He does send us day by day. If we employ ourselves with thankfulness for the blessings which we enjoy at God's hands, we shall have little time and no inclination to complain over those that are withheld, or to grow despondent over troubles and trials which God permits to come upon us. Even afflictions are intended for our good and are, in this sense, a cause for gratitude rather than for complaining. (Rom. 5:3) Paul was thankful for his sufferings, because they promoted the cause of the Gospel. (Col. 1:24) If we hold fast to the blessedness which is ours by faith in Christ, all other things which may be denied to us should seem insignificant by comparison and leave us ample reason for the deepest gratitude. Paul and Silas were so filled with thankfulness for the great spiritual blessings which God had bestowed upon them in Christ, that they not only permitted themselves to be beaten and confined in the stocks for Christ's sake, but at midnight, while their backs were bleeding from the stripes which they had received and while their feet were fast in the stocks, they began to sing hymns of thanksgiving and praise to God. (Acts 16:24,25)

The World Ungrateful

The world does not acknowledge its indebtedness to God. It receives His temporal gifts from day to day as a matter of course and with no thought of gratitude to the Giver of them all. In His goodness God "letteth His sun

shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5:45) But the majority of men never thank Him for it. Neither do they give Him any thanks for the love which He has shown in sending His only Son to save them. They spurn that love; they will not accept the salvation which it offers. And their unbelief is the greatest ingratitude of all. For nothing can be more ungrateful than to refuse and despise this greatest manifestation of God’s love to men.

Only Believers Thankful

Gratitude to God is found only among those who believe. They alone stand in the right relation to God. They alone have a mind and heart disposed to acknowledge that every earthly blessing comes from Him and to appreciate the wonderful love which He reveals in the Gospel. But even among them gratitude is not always as deep and heartfelt as it ought to be.

God’s Mercies Uninterrupted

If God’s gifts were few and far between, if He were sparing of His goodness and dispensed His blessings less bountifully, many men would be more apt to remember that they come from His hands. But His mercies are new unto us every morning. (Lam. 3:23) They are showered upon us day by day without stint. (Ps. 68:19) They come to us with every breath of air we breathe, with every cup of water we drink, with every morsel of food we eat. And the very fact that they come so uninterruptedly tends to make men fail to give thanks to the Giver. If God’s mercies were withheld for a season, if the sun refused to shine or the rain to fall or the crops to grow, the dependence of our race upon God’s goodness would be forced home upon many a heart that now is cold and unthankful. But, God withholds His mercies but seldom. Our days and years are filled with the gifts of His goodness. And it is sad to think that the very fact that God’s mercy is so great should be made the occasion of ingratitude by men.

Thankful In Heart

Our gratitude to God should be deep and heartfelt. We are not to draw near to Him with our mouth and honor Him with our lips while our heart is far from Him. (Isa. 29:13) We should meditate upon His goodness day by day, and call to mind His many mercies, so that our hearts may be truly thankful. To forget to call His gifts to mind is to be ungrateful for them.

In Words

A large part of our prayers at home and in church should be occupied with giving thanks to God for His many mercies in body and soul. (Col. 4:2) We should sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving. (Eph. 5:19,20) We should dwell not only on the earthly blessings, but especially on the Spiritual blessings which He bestows upon us. These call for our fullest thanksgiving even in times of greatest earthly distress and calamity.

In Life

Our life should be an eXpression of our heart's thankfulness to God. If we do favors for our fellow-men, we expect their actions as well as their words to show their gratitude. If they thank us in words and yet deliberately do what they know will offend us, we conclude that their gratitude is not real. Our life shows whether the praise and thanks which we give to the Lord with our lips are the true expression of our heart or not. True gratitude will manifest itself in a sincere endeavor to do His will.

31. Trust.

By faith in Christ we become children of God, and are sure of His Fatherly love and care. We should therefore trust in Him, (Ps. 115:11) place our confidence and dependence on Him, (Prov. 3:5) and be satisfied that He will ever watch over us, provide us with all we need, (Ps. 55:22) and prevent anything from happening to us except that which will result in our final good. (Rom. 8:28)

Child-like Dependence

Our trust in God should be a child-like dependence on Him. A little child places absolute confidence in father and mother. It does not worry about anything it may need to eat or wear, but looks confidently to them to supply its wants. And if danger threatens, it runs to them for safety and help. The child trusts in them because it is sure of their love. So we are to trust in God. For “like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” (Ps. 103:18)

How We Should Trust in God

We should commit ourselves completely into the hands of our heavenly Father, and entrust the entire ordering of our lives to Him. (Ps. 37:5) We should accept whatever befalls us as an expression of His will, (Job 1:21) cling to Him in every danger, (Ps. 31:1) bear patiently and cheerfully whatever trials He sends, (Col. 1:11) and be free from unbelieving care and worry. (Matt. 6:25) We should cast all our care upon Him, because He careth for us. (1 Pet. 5:7)

Why We Should Trust in God

What we know of God should fill us with trust in Him. He loves with an infinite love; for He gave His only begotten Son to save us. And “He that spared not His only Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things” that we need? (Rom. 8:32) He knows our wants even before we ask Him, (Matt. 6:32) and He knows exactly what is best for us, and will send it. He is Almighty, and therefore perfectly able to do for-us everything to which His love and wisdom prompt Him. He has promised never to leave nor forsake us, (Heb. 13:5) and He is faithful to all His promises. Therefore we may boldly say, “The Lord my helper; and I will not fear.” (Heb. 13:6) Nothing should ever be permitted to make us doubt His love and the precious promises which He has given us in His Word. And if we cling trustfully to Him, we shall always have inward peace, no matter how dark or mysterious may be the ways through which His providence leads us.(John 14:1)

Safety in Danger

No matter what may be the danger that threatens us, no harm can possibly befall us without the permission of God. Even the hairs of our head are all numbered. (Matt. 10:30) God marks even the fall of the sparrow (Matt. 10:29) and certainly watches carefully over His children. We must not tempt God and run into danger needlessly. (Matt. 4:7) But if we incur danger in the path of duty, we may confidently entrust ourselves to His protection. (Ps. 33:20) He will be with us. Our life is safe as long as God has use for us on earth. The Jews often attempted to kill Christ, but could not do so until His work was done. And then they were permitted to do so, only because a great good was to be accomplished by it, namely, the redemption of man. When the time allotted to us is completed, God will permit us to be overtaken by death. But He will be with us in the valley of the shadow of death, and we need not fear. (Ps. 23:4) Like Jesus in His last hour, we may trustfully commit our spirit into the hands of our heavenly Father. (Luke 23:46) When our life according to God’s plan is finished on earth, death is no real evil; for it brings us the fulness and completion of our redemption and blessedness in heaven.

Freedom from Worry

We are not to worry about dangers, real or imaginary, which may threaten us, but commit ourselves to God for safe-keeping, knowing that He keeps guard over us. (Ps. 42:5) Nor are we to worry about what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed. (Matt. 6:25) We are not, indeed, to be idle, thoughtless, and improvident, but are to make provision for the future by prudent employment of the present. God expects us to do our duty from day to day. But when we have done this, we are to entrust the rest to God. (Matt. 6:34) He has promised to provide for us, and He will do so. His command and promise are, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33) He who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field will also feed and clothe us. (Matt. 6:26-29) Therefore we are not to worry about the morrow and its needs, but from day to day accept with thankfulness the provision which God sends us. It is easy to trust that God will provide us with what we need, when we have plenty of money and see where the supply is to come from. But trust in God implies that we trust Him to provide for us and are sure that He will do so, even when we see no way by which it can be done.

Contentment

Trust in God means that we commit the entire ordering of our lives to Him, confident that He will shape them in such a way as shall result in our greatest good in the end. We should therefore be content with our lot in life. We may see others, perhaps very wicked people, who are more prosperous and appear to be freer from troubles and trials than we are. We may be tempted to envy them or to murmur and complain of our fate. But we will not do so, if we have the right trust in God and believe that He orders our lives for the best. (Ps. 37:7) We may try by legitimate means to improve our condition, and ought to do so. But we are not to grow sour or discontented, because we do not attain as great a measure of temporal prosperity as we desire. The very things which we desire most may be withheld in mercy. If granted, they might cause the loss of our souls. We see only the present. God sees all the future, the end from the beginning. (Is. 46:10) We should

therefore be content with our lot as God shapes it, and bear in mind that He does all things well. (Mark 7:37) The principal thing is not our earthly prosperity but the salvation of our souls. And God shapes our lives in such a way as to make them most favorable for our soul's salvation.

Patience and Cheerfulness

Since the ordering of our life is in God's hands, and all that happens to us is for the best, though we may not see it at the time, we should be patient and cheerful. Every one's life has its share of vexations, disappointments and sorrows. If we are children of God, these things are all part of the process necessary to refine us and fit us for our eternal home. We should therefore run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who bore patiently and cheerfully much greater trials than we can ever be called on to bear.

Courage and Hope

The trials of the believer, being sent by God, are never permitted to go beyond his ability. (1 Cor. 10:13) God gives the strength needed to bear them. His grace is sufficient for us. (2 Cor. 12:8,9) As our bodily muscles grow strong by exercise, so does our faith. God exercises our faith through trials. (Rom. 5:3,4) We should, therefore, be brave and hopeful under the ills, disappointments and sorrows of life, knowing that God is with us, (Matt. 28:20) and that with His help we shall not be taxed beyond our strength. When God's purposes are accomplished by any burden or trials which He inflicts, He removes them. But even those ills that last through life should not cause us to lose courage. They will all come to an end at last. Our heart is ever to be filled with hope, — hope for better days to come, either here on earth, or if not here, then certainly in heaven. Patiently, bravely and hopefully bearing our cross, we are to follow Jesus, looking for the glorious appearing of our Saviour to receive His own. (Tit. 2:13) The trust which they had in God, and the assurance of salvation through Christ, enabled the martyrs bravely to endure even the death at the stake. They

looked beyond the present to the future glory which God has in store for them that love Him. (1 Cor. 2:9)

32. Prayer.

Prayer is as necessary for the life of the soul as breathing is for that of the body. The prayerless man is not and cannot be a Christian. If we live near God, we must commune with Him. There are many things which we have to tell Him and ask of Him as our best Friend. We need to thank Him for the many mercies which He bestows upon us daily, to beseech Him to forgive and wash away our sins, to give us strength to love and serve Him, to watch over us and guard us, and to give us His Holy Spirit to strengthen and keep us in the faith. The occasions we have for prayer will be as manifold as our wants and experiences in life. Sorrow and joy, our own needs and those of others, should prompt us to pray, A spirit of prayer should underlie all our activity; for only by the grace and strength which God supplies can we live and work properly. We should pray not only for ourselves, but for all men; (Tim. 2:1) for our enemies (Matt. 5:44) as well as our friends.

Christ Prayed

Christ Himself has given us an example of prayerfulness. His whole life was one of communion with His heavenly Father. He began His public ministry with prayer; and He often retired into solitude for extended periods of prayer and meditation. Early in the morning, before the busy work of the day began, He went by Himself and prayed. (Mark 1:35) At night, after He had worked hard, He again retired for prayer. (Luke 5:16) Sometimes He continued in prayer during the whole night. (Luke 6:12) He prayed while He was engaged in His work; (John 11:42) and He thanked God for the success which attended His ministry. (Matt. 11:25) On the night before His crucifixion He offered up His great intercessory prayer. (John 17:1-26) In the garden of Gethsemane He poured out His sorrow-laden soul before His heavenly Father, praying thrice that, if possible, the bitter cup of suffering

might pass from Him. (Matt. 26:36-39) On the cross He prayed for His enemies, (Luke 23:34) cried out to God for comfort in His extreme anguish, (Matt. 27:46) and, when the moment of death had come, prayerfully and trustfully committed His soul to His heavenly Father's keeping. (Luke 23:46)

What to Pray For

A model prayer has been given to us by Christ Himself in the Lord's Prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13) It is short and simple; yet it contains all those things for which all Christians without exception have need to pray. It indicates, also, the spirit which should animate us in approaching the throne of God. We are to come as His children, sure of His Fatherly love. Our first concern should be for the things of God; and therefore we are taught to pray first, that God's name be hallowed and honored among all men, that His kingdom may be established in their hearts and that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Then comes the concern for our own bodily and spiritual welfare. We are taught to pray for our daily bread — a prayer which includes all that is needful for our earthly well-being, — for the forgiveness of our sins, for grace to prevent us from yielding to temptation, and finally to deliver us from the evil one, the devil, and from all the evil of which he is the instigator.

The Manner

Prayer should be the sincere utterance of our hearts, and not a mere matter of form or habit. It should not be made for the sake of appearances, or to secure a reputation for piety. (Matt. 6:5) Such prayers are mere hypocrisy. It does not matter in itself whether our prayers are long or short; but we are not to use vain repetitions as the heathen do, who think they shall be heard for their much speaking. (Matt. 6:7) We are not to repeat the Lord's Prayer or any other prayer a certain number of times, with the idea that so — doing is a merit on our part and will make amends for some shortcoming.

It does not matter whether we pray aloud or silently, in our own words or in the words of another. But the Lord's Prayer should generally be added to

our own prayers, as a summary of petitions for those things for which as Christians we ought to pray. We will do well to draw largely from that treasury of prayers, the Psalms. Great profit may be derived also from the use of good prayer-books. We may find in them the very prayer which our heart desired to express, but for which it was unable to find the proper words. Such books are aids to devotion, written by pious men; and they help us to pray for those things for which we ought to pray, but which, without their aid, we might neglect. The same is true of the Church Book, which contains many short prayers, called collects, and numerous other prayers for various occasions and conditions. Such aids to devotion should be diligently used. They are a treasure of the Church for which we ought to be thankful.

Our Posture

The posture which we assume in prayer should be one which indicates reverence for the Almighty God into whose presence we weak and sinful beings come. Ordinarily this should be kneeling or standing, though it is possible, of course, to pray in any position. In the public services on the Lord's Day we stand during prayer, because it is the day of the Lord's resurrection and a day of joy. Kneeling is an attitude of humiliation. It is particularly appropriate as an outward expression of the feeling of humility with which we should approach God's throne. Our prayers are not, indeed, heard because of the posture we assume. But in so far as the posture is an indication of the Spirit in which we come before God, it indicates also whether our prayers are acceptable or not. If we come before the Lord in a proper spirit of reverence and humility, we will endeavor to give outward expression to our inward attitude. Unless there be physical inability to stand, the habit of those who sit while others stand in church is extremely reprehensible and an evidence of the lack of proper reverence for God.

When We Should Pray

The Christian should pray always. (Luke 21:36) We cannot, indeed, be always uttering articulate prayers; but our soul should ever be open toward

God. We should pray whenever we feel the need of prayer: when we are tempted to do wrong, (Matt. 26:41) when we are exposed to danger, (Matt. 8:25) when we are in distress and need God's help, (Matt. 15:22) when we are bowed down by a burden of guilt (Luke 18:13; Ps. 51) or sorrow, (Ps. 25:16,17) when we or our friends are sick; (Jas. 5:14,15) in fact, every time we feel the need of God's help and blessing, or have received any special tokens of His grace and mercy. (Phil. 4:6)

But we ought also to have stated times of prayer. (Dan. 6:10) We should pray when we rise in the morning, when we go to bed at night, and when we sit down at the table to enjoy the food which God has provided for us. We should never neglect these seasons of prayer on any pretext of haste or weariness. The head of the family should gather the members of his household around him morning and evening for family worship. (Josh. 24:15) This is a much neglected custom in these days, but one which, if observed, proves an inestimable blessing to the members of such a household. We should also join heartily in the prayers in the church, remembering that the minister prays not for himself alone, but for the whole congregation, of which we are a part.

Praying in Christ's Name

We should pray in Christ's name. If we do not, our prayers are not heard. But if we do, we have a special promise that they will be heard. Whatsoever we ask the Father in His name will be given to us. (John 15:16)

To pray in Christ's name means to pray as those who are reconciled to God through Christ. We do not deserve that God should hear our prayers, but rather that He should inflict temporal and eternal punishment upon us. But through Christ we have access to God, (Eph. 2:18) enjoy his favor, (Rom. 5:2) and have the assurance that He hears and will answer our prayers. (John 16:24)

To pray in Christ's name means, however, also to pray in His spirit; that is, to ask for things in the same way in which He asked for them. We should entrust to the wisdom and love of God the doing or not doing what we ask. (1 John 5:14) We must always set His will above our own. No matter how ardently we may desire the bestowal of a particular blessing or the removal

of a particular burden, we should say with Christ, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” (Matt. 26:29; Matt. 6:10) We are short-sighted. God alone knows what is best for us.

The Answer to Prayer

God always hears and answers the prayer of the believer. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much. (Jas. 5:16) But we must ask in faith, not wavering or doubting. (Jas. 1:6,7) Only faith and not doubt receives the answer to prayer.

God’s answer to our prayer may be delayed, and often is. If so, we should continue to pray unceasingly until we are heard. (Luke 11:5,10; 18:1-8) God decides on the time for answering our requests. He also decides on the manner. He may answer our prayer in a way altogether different from what we wished or expected, but in a manner no less effectual. We may ask, for instance, for the prevention of a sorrow or the removal of a burden. Apparently the prayer is unheard; for the sorrow comes, and the burden remains. But at the same time we are given the strength needed to bear our cross; we grow spiritually strong. And this increase of strength is God’s answer to our prayer. (2 Cor. 12:9) His grace becomes sufficient for us. In the end this is a greater blessing than that for which we originally prayed; just as it is a greater blessing to possess the strength of a man and bear easily a burden of a hundred pounds, than to possess only the strength of a child or an invalid and stagger under the weight of ten. God wants us to be strong in the faith; and He lets us exercise and strengthen our faith by bearing burdens.

33. Self Defense.

The Christian must defend himself against the enemies of his soul. If he does not, they will rob him of the salvation which has become his by faith. For this reason the Scriptures exhort us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, (Phil. 2:12) to fight the good fight of faith, (1 Tim. 6:12) and to hold fast what we have that no one take our crown. (Rev. 3:11) We must not only become Christians but remain Christians. Only he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Matt. 24:13)

The Good Fight

The Christian must fight the good fight of faith, if he would lay hold on eternal life. (1 Tim. 6:12) He must defend himself against the enemies who seek to destroy his soul. These enemies are our own flesh, or the old evil nature which remains in us alongside of the new nature implanted by faith; the world with its enticements and allurements to sin; and the devil, the source and promoter of every evil thing. These enemies constantly tempt us to do evil, and we must fight against them, otherwise they will overcome us and bring about our everlasting ruin.

What is at Stake

On the issue of this conflict hangs the eternal welfare of our soul. If we lose our soul, we lose all. “What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36,37) To make our salvation possible, Jesus died the cruel death of the cross. If our soul possesses such value in His eyes, it certainly should possess the greatest value in our own. And we should spare no effort to preserve it in the faith against every assault of our foes.

Temptation

The form in which the enemies of our soul make their attacks is temptation. And we must defend ourselves against them by resolutely refusing to obey their evil promptings. Temptation must be repelled at once. If we delay, or dally with it, we have already half lost the battle.

Temptations come to all from within and without. Some are more strongly tempted than others, owing to their particular disposition or their unfavorable surroundings. But no one escapes temptation entirely. On the contrary, all are tempted severely enough to require all the determination of their will and all the strength they derive from God, in order to overcome. Temptation in itself is not sin; for the Saviour Himself was tempted. (Matt. 4:1; Heb. 4:15) But unless we are constantly on our guard against it and resist it steadfastly, it will lead us into sin. (1 Pet. 5:8) It often comes in unexpected forms and at unexpected times. For this reason we must watch and pray. (Matt. 26:41) If we do not, we shall be taken unawares, as an army is sometimes taken unawares by its enemies and defeated.

Effort Necessary

No one ever won a battle worth the winning without great effort. Men must strive hard for earthly success and reward. And in spiritual things, as in others, victory means effort and determination. If men are willing to strive hard for the fleeting rewards of earth, we ought surely be willing and ready to undergo every hardship for the sake of winning the crown of eternal life. (1 Cor. 9:25) The victory is worth all it costs. For to those who overcome, it shall be granted to sit with Christ in His throne, even as He also overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

The Flesh

Our greatest peril lies in ourselves; our most dangerous enemy is our own bad nature, with which we were born, and which the Scripture calls the flesh. (Jas. 1:14) We must contend against the evil lusts that war against the

soul (1 Pet. 2:11) as long as we live on earth; for we shall never be free from their sinful promptings. If we value our souls, we dare not yield our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but must yield them as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Rom. 6:13) We must mortify our members which are upon the earth, (Col. 3:5) and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. (Gal. 5:24) Among the sins to which the flesh tempts are lust, or wicked desires, laziness, gluttony, drunkenness, greed, deceit, malice, dishonesty, hatred, envy and the like. Different persons are tempted differently, according to their natural disposition and inclinations. But in one form or another the flesh constantly tempts us all. It is our natural inclination to evil that makes us so susceptible to the temptations of the world and of Satan.

The World

Our second enemy is the world, that is, the people and society that live a worldly life. The world has become estranged from God, and seeks to estrange us from Him. It seeks through our evil nature to turn us aside from the love of God to the love of the sinful things of the world, from the loving of God above all things to the loving of earthly objects more than God. But we must “not love the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh the lust of the eye and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15,16)

We are in the world and have our place and work in it, but we are not to be of it. (John 17:15,16) We are to be separated from its sin and evil. We are not to seek to escape from its temptations by fleeing away from our fellow-men and becoming hermits or monks, but, remaining in our place and sphere, we are to overcome its temptations by the grace of God. (1 John 5:4) We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them. (Eph. 5:11) We are to deny its ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly. (Tit. 2:12) Its gains, its sinful indulgences, its ambitions, its honors, — none of these things should be permitted to lure us from the allegiance which we owe to God. Its hatred, envy, enmity, violence, injustice, insults and injuries should not be permitted to hurry us into anger, impatience or kindred sins against the

Christian law of love. And the example of others who do evil, however great their number, should not be permitted to influence us to a similar course. (Exod. 23:2) “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; but strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:13,14)

The Devil

Behind all the temptations of the flesh and the world is the devil, the great arch-enemy of God and man. The devil uses the flesh and the world as his allies, and is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to tempt us through one or the other. (1 Pet. 5:8) He uses every possible means by which he can hope to incite us to evil. But he delights especially in attacking us at our weakest point, and tempting us to that kind of transgression to which our own heart is most inclined, whether it be laziness, lust, greed, anger, evil-speaking, pride, envy or any other sin. He tempts us to despise God’s Word, to fall into doubt and unbelief, presumption, self-righteousness, stubbornness of heart, deSpair, denial of God and every other species of sin, worldly or spiritual. We must be constantly on our guard against him by watchfulness and prayer, and must continue to repel his assaults day after day. No one can serve two masters. (Matt. 6:24) And if we would be servants of Christ, we must refuse to do the bidding of Satan.

Temptations are Trials

Temptations are meant by Satan for our ruin, but are permitted by God for the trial of our faith. (Jas. 1:12) Temptation, overcome, makes our faith stronger. God Himself does not tempt us to sin, though He permits Satan to do so. “God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man.” (Jas. 1:13) In the passages in which the Bible speaks of God as tempting any person, the word tempt does not mean a tempting to sin, but a trying or testing. God tempted Abraham (Gen. 22:1) and others in the sense of trying or testing their faith. And He permits Satan to tempt us, because temptations serve the purpose of testing and proving our faith. They show

whether our faith is true, and whether we really love God enough to refrain from sin for His sake.

We are, indeed, in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, taught to pray to God, "Lead us not into temptation." But the meaning of the petition is, that God would hinder the world, the flesh and the devil from tempting us, and give us strength to overcome when they do tempt us. God wants us to do right and not wrong. He would not and cannot therefore tempt us to do evil.

Help in the Conflict

Christ himself was tempted and knows what temptation means for us. He sympathizes with us and helps us when we are tempted. (Heb. 2:18) We need His help. We cannot fight the good fight in our own strength. But His strength is sufficient for us. With His help we can conquer. We should constantly pray for it. God does not permit us to be tempted beyond our ability, but gives strength in proportion to the trial to those who seek it of Him. (1 Cor. 10:13) With His help we can win the victory, and receive the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10)

34. Self Denial.

If we wish Christ to recognize us as His disciples, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. (Luke 9:23) Without self-denial, no one can be a Christian.

What Self-denial Means

We belong to Christ by faith. We no longer belong to ourselves. We dare not, therefore, follow our own will, but must do the will of Christ. (1 Cor. 6:20) Consequently we must decide in favor of Christ's will, whenever there is a conflict between His will and the desires of our own heart. We cannot do Christ's will and that of the flesh at the same time. One or the other must be denied. (Matt. 6:24) And we are to deny ourselves and not Christ.

Crucifying the Flesh

We must not only subdue our sinful passions, and suppress all ungodliness and worldly lusts, but we must willingly sacrifice our innocent desires and our earthly affections whenever they interfere with the performance of the will of Christ. The flesh must be crucified with its affections and lusts, (Gal. 5:24) and our whole being be brought into harmony with Him. The love of Christ should constrain us (2 Cor. 5:14) in all that we think and say and do. We should be able to say with St. Paul: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) We are to live for Christ and for Him alone.

Its Deep Significance

Genuine self-denial means more, therefore, than the giving up of a pleasure now and then, and the making of an occasional sacrifice for our religion. It means the entire setting aside of ourselves, and the complete and absolute subordination of all our own desires and affections to God's will. This denial of self and entire harmony of our being with Christ is but imperfectly accomplished in us here on earth. (Phil. 3:12) We shall not be made perfectly like Him till the day of judgment. (1 John 3:2) But if that complete transformation is to take place in us then, the beginning of it must be made here on earth.

What it Involves

Self-denial involves the giving up of everything that is sinful, (Tit. 2:12) no matter how much the prospect of gain or pleasure may tempt us to pursue it. It also involves the giving up all of those things which, though they are innocent in themselves, expose us to temptation, imperil our salvation, or stand in the way of doing our duty. (1 Cor. 6:12; Matt. 5:29) And inasmuch as we are to think of the welfare and salvation of others as well as of our own, it means that we should, whenever it is necessary, forego our own comfort and pleasure in order to promote their welfare and avoid giving offense to them. (1 Cor. 8:13)

Its Necessity

The life of the Christian is a constant conflict against opposing powers of evil. We must therefore willingly give up everything that would weaken us in any way or interfere with the performance of our whole duty. Our life is described in the Scriptures as a race for the crown of life. (1 Cor. 9:24-26) Anything which would lessen our chances of winning should be willingly sacrificed. Self-denial is and must be practiced by those who hope to succeed in earthly contests. The racer, the boxer, the wrestler and all others who take part in athletic contests, dare not gratify every desire, but must deny themselves many indulgences and subject themselves to the most rigid

training in order to win. Their body and mind must be brought to the highest possible state of efficiency. Otherwise they cannot win. They must subdue themselves before they can hope to subdue others. And they grudge no denial or sacrifice which may be necessary to secure the result they seek. "Now they do it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:25) one. We should certainly be willing to sacrifice as much for the sake of winning our eternal salvation as they for a temporary reward. We can win nothing worth the winning either in earthly or spiritual things by taking our own ease, seeking our own comfort, and gratifying every desire.

The Sin of Self-Indulgence

In this pampered age of luxury, the virtue of self-denial is very rare. Even many who profess to be good Christians seldom think of denying themselves a comfort, a convenience or a pleasure for the sake of furthering their own spiritual welfare or the cause of Christ. The self-indulgent Spirit of the age has infected them also. If they make any sacrifices for their religion at all, it is with much grumbling and complaining about the hardship it involves. Personal ease and comfort are but too often placed above the interests of the soul and of Christ's kingdom on earth. (Phil. 2:21) But such self-indulgence is a sin. We are in this world for the purpose of doing the greatest amount of good with our talents and possessions, and not for the purpose of gratifying our own selfish desires and appetites.

Acts of Self-Denial and Self-Sacrifice.

The particular acts of self-denial which may be required of us depend very much upon our natural disposition, our station in life, and our surroundings. One will have to deny himself in one way, and another in another way. Every day will bring to light new occasions for us to exercise this Christian grace. We are to be thoroughly unselfish, placing ourselves in the background, and caring above all things for the will of God and the happiness of others. (1 Cor. 10:24) We are to sacrifice our money, our comfort, our convenience, our advantage and our pleasure, whenever true love to God or man requires it. We are not to please ourselves but Christ,

(Gal. 1:10) and are to be ready to serve others always, (Rom. 15:2) even though it demands the greatest sacrifices on our part. We are to go on in the path to which duty points without consulting our own inclinations. (Gal. 1:16) We are to do so even at the risk of our life and in the face of certain death.

He that saves his life, that is, who places his earthly comfort and safety above the duty which he owes to Christ, shall lose it; but he who loses his life for Christ's sake, and willingly makes every sacrifice which his religion demands, shall save it. (Luke 9:24) He shall receive life eternal.

The Joy of Self-Sacrifice

The making of sacrifices for the sake of furthering Christ's cause or of rendering others happy, though often difficult at the time, is one of the greatest sources of happiness open to us. To be unselfish, to place the happiness of others above our own, and to sacrifice our own wishes and desires for their sakes, is the surest way to be happy ourselves. It gives us a good conscience and the consciousness of having acted in the spirit of Christ. (Rom. 15:3) It gives us the joy of seeing the discomfort and misery of others turned into rejoicing by our efforts. "It is more blessed to give than receive." (Acts 20:35) And the truth of these words is experienced by none so fully and completely as by those who give themselves, who sacrifice their own strength, time, advantage and pleasure for the sake of extending Christ's kingdom and of doing good to their fellow-men.

The Example of Christ

The Saviour is our example of perfect self-denial. He forgot Himself entirely in His desire to do the will of His Father and to promote the happiness of men. He sought not His own pleasure, honor or glory, but the glory of God alone. (John 8:49-50) To secure our eternal happiness, He yielded up His life through the cruel death of the cross. His reward was the privilege of seeing the human race redeemed by His sufferings from sin and eternal destruction. It was the prospect of this reward that encouraged Him to go forward in His path of suffering. "He endured the cross, despising the

shame” for the sake of this “joy that was set before Him.” (Heb. 12:2) The prospect of our reward should encourage us also. All the sacrifices demanded by faithfulness to Christ are not worthy to be compared with the reward which Christ has in store for the faithful. (Rom. 8:18) This was the comfort of St. Paul, who was so eminently distinguished for the greatness of his self-denial and self-sacrifice. And he joyfully declares: “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing.” (2 Tim. 4:8)

35. Self Control.

We should subdue and suppress all sinful passions, (Tit. 2:12) and should exercise temperance and moderation in the indulgence of those appetites and desires which are in themselves innocent. (1 Cor. 9:25) We must control our body and bring it into subjection; (1 Cor. 9:27) and we must also control our mind, (1 Pet. 4:7) so that we may not be ruled by our natural inclinations, disposition, thoughts, desires and impulses, but hold them all in check. Self-control is absolutely necessary, if we would keep from being hurried into sin by our evil impulses and passions, and be enabled to serve God to the best effect. (1 Cor. 10:12; Luke 21:34-36) To acquire such self-control means to achieve a victory over self. And while we shall never succeed perfectly in this world, we will succeed in a large measure, if we earnestly try. The victory is worth the effort. He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32)

Our Mind and Temper

Our mind and temper are to become more and more Christ-like. (Phil. 2:5) We should therefore bring our mind under the control of our will, curb its propensities to evil, and direct it into right channels. We are to be believing, loving, thankful, peaceable, gentle, kind, contented, temperate, patient, brave, cheerful and hopeful. (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-7) When we feel any impulses to be and act otherwise, we are to suppress them by the power of our will, and bring our thoughts and feelings into harmony with the requirements of Christ and the example He has given. Feelings of envy, jealousy, pride, anger, hatred, lust, covetousness, avarice and deceit may arise in the heart. (Matt 15:19) If they do, we are not to give way to them in word or deed, but kill the evil in the bud. If we do not control these impulses of the heart, they will soon control us and make us their slave. We must keep our heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

(Prov. 4:23) Many a person has ceased to be his own master, and has become the miserable slave of his own evil passions.

Anger

There is a just anger and indignation against sin, such as Christ felt and manifested when He found the temple profaned. (Matt. 21:12,13) But all other anger is sinful and to be avoided. (Eph. 4:31) Life is, indeed, full of vexations and trials of our patience. All are tempted to give way to anger sometimes; and those who are of an impulsive disposition are tempted to give way to anger on very slight provocation. But however great the provocation, we are to keep control of our temper. And when others speak angrily to us, we are to remember that “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” (Prov. 15:1) “For the wrath of men worketh not the righteousness of God.” (Jas. 1:20) Even when we have been greatly offended and injured, we are not to let ourselves be carried away by our feelings, nor seek revenge; “for vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19) We are to forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us. (Gen. 4:5-8)

Its Evil Consequences

To give way to anger is a sin, and leads to other sins. It has often led to murder. (Gen. 4:5-8) And even when its consequences are not so extreme, it invariably produces evil results. To allow ourselves to be controlled by anger is to become the helpless tool of Satan. In anger words are said which are afterwards bitterly regretted, but which cannot be unsaid and whose effect cannot be effaced. Anger is nearly always unjust; it is always harsh. If it tells the truth, it does not tell it in love as the Christian should. (Eph. 4:15) It nearly always exaggerates. It leads to profanity. Its effects upon the person who is guilty of it and upon others is very bad. It lowers his respect for himself, and lowers the respect of others for him. It diminishes his influence for good, and wastes a large portion of his energies. It causes others a great deal of annoyance, and often a great deal of misery. We should learn to control our temper, or we shall do and say many things

which in our better selves we do not intend, and be hindered from doing things which we really desire to do. A person with a quick and violent temper will, unless he keeps it under control, be a burden to himself and to every one around him.

The Tongue

The tongue is a little member of our body, but a powerful instrument for good or evil. (Jas. 3:5) Unless we learn to keep it under control, we shall do a great deal of wrong and cause a great deal of suffering to ourselves and to others. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. (Eccl. 3:7) And we should be careful to do as the occasion demands. Toward God we should use our tongue in praise, thanksgiving and prayer. Toward men we should use it in speaking the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15)

Profanity

Cursing and swearing are serious and great sins. We must not let ourselves be guilty of them under the severest provocation, much less let them become a habit. The great prevalence of these sins disposes many people to regard them as of no great consequence. But they grossly deceive themselves. Profanity is expressly forbidden by the second commandment of the Decalogue. And that commandment has a special threat against transgressors: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." (Exod. 20:7) To take the holy name of God in vain is and can be no light matter. For every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. (Matt. 12:36) What then will become of those who recklessly take the name of God in vain?

Falsehood and Slander

A lying tongue is an abomination, unto the Lord. (Prov. 6:16,17) We are to put away lying and speak the truth to our neighbor. (Eph. 4:25) We are to be especially on our guard against speaking evil of others. We are expressly

forbidden by the eighth commandment to bear false witness against them. (Exod. 20:16) We must not slander them nor take delight in hearing and repeating evil reports concerning them. We are to judge charitably of other people, (Luke 6:36,37) and so far as possible speak well of them. We are not to excuse or make light of sin; but whenever possible we are to ascribe good and not evil motives to others. If we cannot speak well of them, we had better not speak of them at all. To speak evil of others is a great sin, and creates an enormous amount of misery in the world. Evil words once uttered cannot be unsaid, but pass with astonishing rapidity from one mouth to another; and what was at first a little flame becomes a great conflagration. (Jas. 3:5)

How Tamed

An unruly tongue is full of deadly poison. (Jas. 3:8) Unless we bridle our tongue, our religion is vain. (Jas. 1:26) To use the tongue for the purpose of slandering or cursing our fellow men and at the same time for praising God is the greatest hypocrisy. (Jas. 3:10) God cannot accept such praise. If we value our salvation, we must keep our tongue under control. No one can tame our tongue but we ourselves.

But we can do so, if we will, by the grace of God. We must do so, if we would avoid bringing misery upon others and trouble upon ourselves in this world, and would escape eternal condemnation in the world to come.

Temperance

While on the one hand we subdue and suppress all those desires, appetites and impulses which are in themselves sinful, we are on the other hand also to keep in control those appetites and desires which are in themselves lawful, and indulge them with moderation. We are to be temperate in all things: in eating, in drinking, in our clothing, in our pleasures, our ambitions and our pursuit of gain. Intemperance of any kind interferes with the performance of our duties in life.

Drunkenness

Drunkenness is a very prevalent evil and a great sin. A drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. (1 Cor. 6:10) He lowers himself below the brute, deliberately robs himself of the use of that reason and understanding which ought to be his particular glory as a man, wastes his money, impoverishes his family, brings disgrace upon himself and others, and, unless he repents, casts away the salvation of his soul.

A Dreadful Slavery

Those who have become the slaves of drink find it very hard to free themselves from their bondage. The liking for strong drink which they have acquired, the associations and companionships which they have formed, and the hold which their habit has upon them are so strong, that it is only by the grace of God and the utmost power of their will that they can return to habits of sobriety.

A Warning

We are, therefore, to take warning against the formation of this habit, and should withstand the first temptations to such an evil. The Bible warns us against the perils of strong drink: "Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1) "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." (Prov. 23:29-32) We should carefully avoid the places and the companions that would tempt us. Many will find it best and safest for themselves to abstain from all use of strong drink; and all should abstain, whenever a contrary course would give offense to others. (1 Cor. 8:13)

Gluttony

Intemperance in eating is as much a sin as drunkenness. (Phil. 3:19; 1 Pet. 4:3) Overindulgence in food breeds disease, and unfits body and mind for work quite as much in the long run as intemperance in drinking; though its immediate effects are not so apparent. Many persons would have lived much longer and have been far more effective for good in the world, if they had been temperate in eating.

Sensuality

We should control and subdue every prompting of our nature to lust or sensuality. Evil and unchaste thoughts should be suppressed as soon as they appear in our minds. We should never harbor them or take delight in them. And every word or deed of impurity should be shunned. Those who yield to lust and lewdness enfeeble their body and mind, unfit themselves for the right performance of life's duties, and bring upon themselves the accusations of their own conscience and the curse of God. They shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (1 Cor. 6:9,10) Only the pure in heart shall see God. (Matt. 5:8)

Intemperance of Any Kind A Sin

We are to use this World as not abusing it. (1 Cor. 7:31) Used in moderation, "every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." (1 Tim. 4:4) But intemperance in the use or pursuit of any earthly blessings, however innocent in themselves, is sinful. It is a proof of an inordinate love of those earthly things, a placing of them above the love and duty which we owe to God. It is idolatry; for what ever we love more than God we make our idol. We are not to make a god of our stomach (Phil. 3:19) or of money or of pleasure, nor find in the gratification of our desires the chief object of our life. We are placed in this world for quite another purpose than to get the greatest amount of pleasure out of it. Our chief object should be the employment of our powers to serve God and

man. (Matt. 6:33) And for this reason we should shun intemperance of every kind; for it interferes with the best performance of that duty.

36. Sorrow And Pain.

Believers are called upon to endure much sorrow and pain in this world. They must suffer the afflictions which are common to men, and in addition to these they must endure many things just because they are Christians. For the world hates and persecutes them as it did their Master, Jesus Christ. (John 15:20)

These afflictions are permitted by God to come upon us for some good purpose. We should therefore bear them all cheerfully and bravely. If we do, then they become our cross, which we take up and bear for Christ's sake. Unless we bear our cross, Christ will not recognize us as His disciples. For He says: "He that taketh not up His cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." (Matt. 10:38) We must willingly endure all things and even be ready to die for His sake.

The World Full of Sorrow and Pain

Ever since the Fall into sin, the earth has been the abode of suffering and woe. No person escapes his share of afflictions. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." (Job 5:7) As death followed upon man's transgression, (Rom. 5:12) so all the pains and sufferings that embitter our life and that end finally in the death of the body are the result and consequence of sin. If there were no sin, there would be no sorrow or pain, just as there is no sorrow or pain in heaven, (Rev. 21:4) because there is no sin there. For the wicked and impenitent, these sorrows of life are a punishment for their sins, because they are still under the wrath of God. But for those who believe and are forgiven for Christ's sake, these afflictions are no longer a punishment, but a correction and chastening. (1 Cor. 11:32)

It should be borne in mind, however, that while repentance for sin brings forgiveness, it does not make the sinful deed undone nor remove its earthly

consequences. One who has ruined his health by a course of sensuality or drunkenness does not find his health restored by his repentance. And while the consequences of misdeeds done by those who have repented are to be regarded no longer as a punishment but as a chastening, the fact that those consequences remain, even after we have repented and are forgiven, should be a warning against any tendency on our part to do wrong on the plea that we may repent and be forgiven. The Prodigal son in the parable was forgiven by his father, but that forgiveness did not restore his wasted patrimony nor repair his broken constitution. (Luke 15:13)

Suffering and Punishment

Since suffering is not always a punishment for sin, we dare not conclude that because some people suffer more than others, therefore they are more wicked. (Luke 13:1-5) The disciples thought that a certain blind man was suffering for some special sin of his own or of his parents. But Christ corrected them, and said that the man was suffering blindness in order that the glory of God might be manifest in him. (John 9:1-3) The friends of Job accused him of having committed a great crime, because they saw him suffer so much. But Job defended himself against their accusations, and God Himself took Job's part against them.

A Chastening for Believers

The sorrows of believers are often as severe and even more severe than those of the unbeliever. They are corrections and chastenings, by means of which God seeks to lead them to deeper repentance (Rev. 3:19) and stronger faith in Him. For "Thom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as the father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. 3:12) Affliction is, therefore, for the believer a sign, not of God's wrath, but of His love. If He did not correct and chasten us, we would not be His children. (Heb. 12:8)

Chastening Necessary

We often need the correction which comes through sorrow and pain. Otherwise we would be led astray, forget God and learn to love the world and its sins. Trouble brings us back to God, (Isa. 26:16) to seek His mercy anew, and to pray for strength from Him.

God's Ways Mysterious

We do not always understand the reason of God's dealings with us. His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways His ways. (Isa. 55:8) But He always deals with us in love, and permits only such things to come upon us as are calculated to do us the most good in the end. His thoughts toward us are thoughts of good and not of evil, (Jer. 29:11) even when we cannot understand them. We are His children; He loves us, and desires our good. And we should, therefore, believe that He doeth all things well.

Some Uses of Affliction

We can perceive some of the uses of affliction even here on earth. When everything goes well, we are tempted by our prosperity to forget God, from whom our prosperity comes. In adversity we turn to Him as our only Helper. For this reason the Bible declares that "it is better to go to the house of mourning than go to the house of feasting." In the former God is much more likely to be remembered than in the latter. The man who is rich is tempted to lean more upon his wealth than on God; (Luke 12:16-21) while he who is poor is taught by his very poverty to turn to God for provision. He who enjoys uninterrupted health is tempted to forget God in the pursuit of business or pleasure; while he who is laid for a season upon a bed of sickness or pain is taught to reflect upon the frailty of life, the vanity of all things earthly, and the need of giving thought to the things of eternity. He who has suffered no bereavement is in danger of losing sight of the fact that he and his are mortal; while he who has laid a dear one in the grave is brought face to face with the fact that death is no respecter of persons. The knowledge that loved ones have gone before us into the eternal world brings that world nearer to our thoughts, and aids us in setting our affection on things above and not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:2)

Blessings in Disguise

The very things of which we perhaps complain as our greatest hardships are often our greatest blessings. They stand between our souls and eternal destruction. If they were removed, as we sometimes impatiently wish that they were, we would fall away from God and be lost. They serve as a check on our evil nature, refine us from the dross of earth as gold is refined in the fire, and purify our thoughts and aspirations. (Isa. 46:10) They prepare and fit us, in accordance with God's own plan, to shine as His jewels in the diadem of heaven. (Mal. 3:17) If we realize this truth, we shall say with St. Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18)

When We Shall Understand

In this world we do not understand the reason of all God's dealings with us. But we shall see and understand it all in the world to come. "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know even as we also are known." (1 Cor. 13:12) The sickness, the pain, the sorrow, the poverty, the bereavements, the disappointments, the blighted hopes of life — all these things remain more or less a mystery to us now. But all shall be clear to us then, and we shall see that God has done all things well.

Bravery

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22) If we would be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, we must "suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:17) We should bear our sufferings and pains bravely, as Jesus did. He did not shrink back from the path of suffering and pain which God had appointed for Him. He went forward and courageously endured all His dreadful sufferings and pain, because it was His Father's will. When He was beaten by the soldiers of Pilate, when the nails were driven through His hands and feet, when He was raised upon the cross and left to hang there till He died, He bore it all

with patient courage. Whenever we are called upon to suffer, and particularly when we are called on to suffer for Christ's sake and in His cause, we should think of His courage, and bear our sufferings bravely according to the example which He has given us. (Heb. 12:1-4) Even if it should be necessary for us to die in His cause, we should be willing and ready to do so. (Acts 7:59,60) In the early age of the Church and in the times of the Reformation many Christians had to seal their faith with their blood. They died as martyrs rather than deny Christ.

Cheerfulness

It is easy and deserves no special credit to be cheerful, when there is nothing to make us otherwise. Any one can be cheerful then. But it requires much Christian grace to be cheerful when the heart is filled with sorrow and the body racked with pain. But we should bear all our trials cheerfully and without murmuring, because we know that it is God's will that we should suffer. Murmuring, complaining or growing rebellious under the chastening rod of God only makes our afflictions heavier to bear. God will not permit us to be tried above our strength; (1 Cor. 10:13) and when His good and holy purposes have been accomplished by the trials and burdens which He lays upon us, He will remove them. (Ps. 50:15) We are to take up our cross and follow Jesus. (Matt. 10:36) We are not to bear our troubles simply because we must bear them and cannot do otherwise. We are to bear them willingly and cheerfully. Only then do they become our cross. Otherwise they remain simply afflictions like those of the heathen or of the unbelievers. Only when we take them up and bear them as our cross voluntarily and cheerfully, do they accomplish in us the purpose which God intends.

37. Service, Work And Daily Occupation.

Every person has his place and sphere in the world, and his particular work to do. And whatever our work may be, we are to do it to the best of our ability. For we are to do all things as unto God, (Eph. 6:7) and in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Col. 3:17) In doing our work conscientiously, we are serving Him.

Men Meant to Work

God intended from the beginning, that man should work. He told man to subdue the earth, (Gen. 1:28) and that involved labor. And when He had planted a garden eastward in Eden, He placed man in it to dress it and keep it. (Gen. 2:15) Before the fall into sin, work was an unalloyed pleasure. Since that time it has become in a sense a hardship. For man must now earn his bread in the sweat of his face; (Gen. 3:19) and the earth no longer yields its full strength in return for the labor expended upon it. (Gen. 4:12) But labor is still a blessing, and idleness a curse.

Work Necessary

Work is necessary for the support of human life. God blesses the earth and makes it fruitful, but man must supply the labor to plow and sow and reap; otherwise the fruitfulness of the earth will not avail him. God has given men the physical and mental faculties necessary to devise and manufacture whatever they need for their earthly well-being. But men must work with brain and hands, in order to produce those things which they need. Each person is a wheel, whether great or small, in the machinery of the world's

activity. The work of each is useful and necessary in its place for the well-being of society in general. The farmer, the mechanic, the laborer, the merchant, the professional man, the teacher, the seamstress, the cook, the housemaid, — each in his or her sphere has a particular work to do which is necessary for the good of all. And each ought to do his or her work faithfully and well. (Matt. 25:14-30)

The Dignity of Labor

No work, however humble, is mean or degrading, if done in Christ's name and for His sake. (John 13:12-17) Many times we are obliged to do work which is not pleasant or agreeable. And some are obliged to spend their whole life in drudgery day by day. But God regards only the manner in which our work is done, and not whether it is regarded by men as highly respectable or not. The crossing sweeper and the bootblack are doing a work that is pleasing to God, if they do their work well in the fear and love of God. (1 Cor. 10:31) The Scotch cobbler had the right appreciation of the dignity of any honest calling when he declared, that he was a shoemaker by the grace of God. (1 Cor. 7:21,22) Often the work which seems the greatest drudgery is the most useful.

Choice of Occupation

Any honest occupation is honorable. But we should, whenever possible, choose that calling in life for which our physical and mental abilities fit us the best. In this case we can use our talents to the best advantage and do the greatest amount of good with them. When, however, there appears to be no opening for the exercise of those talents which we consider to be our highest gifts, we should heartily, promptly and courageously do whatever opportunity offers us, and do it well.

Our occupation must be one in which it is possible not only to make money, which seems so often to be the only consideration which men take into account, but one in which it is possible to be a Christian and do right. If any find that they cannot lead a Christian life in the calling in which they are engaged, they should immediately leave it and engage in another.

Serving God in our Calling

In the Middle Ages men imagined that, in order to serve God best, they must forsake the ordinary occupations of life and the society of their fellow-men, and become monks or hermits. But they were wrong. We serve God best by doing well and conscientiously the duties of every day life, (1 Cor. 7:20; Luke 3:12-14) as obedient children, (Eph. 6:1-3) studious pupils, faithful laborers (Eph. 6:6) and thoughtful and considerate employers. (Eph. 6:9) Not only the minister and others engaged in the special work of the Church, but every Christian who is faithful in the performance of the duties of his station in life, however lowly, is serving God and doing His will. There may be special work in the Church which you can and should do for God. But in any case, you can and should always serve Him in your daily work, (1 Cor. 7:24) by letting your faithfulness in the discharge of your daily duties, your Christ-like demeanor and conduct, your walk and conversation be a testimony for Christ and the power of His Gospel. In this way each can and should let his light shine before men and glorify God. (Matt. 5:16)

Industry

We should not be drones in the busy hive of humanity. There is a share of work that falls to each of us, and we should do it cheerfully and gladly. It is part of our duty as Christians to do our daily work. (Rom. 12:11) To be slothful and idle is sinful. (2 Thess. 3:11,12) Industry is not only a duty, but it is the path which alone can lead to earthly prosperity. Without good, hard, earnest and persistent work it is impossible to make headway in the world. (Prov. 24:30-34) Success can only come as the result of honest toil (Prov. 20:4) of brain or hands, or both.

Idleness a Curse

Idleness is a sin. It wastes time and talents that should be spent in useful service. Those who are rich enough to live without working for their daily bread need to work, in order to manage their property as trustees of God,

and to use it for the purposes which God intends. Rich people who simply take life easy and are of no use to God and their fellow-man will be punished. No rich man has a right to live without doing any work. The moment he becomes free from cares in providing for himself, the duty of assuming his share in the larger burdens of God's work for humanity begins to press upon him.

The indolent and the slothful are told by the Scriptures to go to the ant and learn from them the lesson of industry. (Prov. 6:6-11) God, means that we should earn our daily bread. The idler refuses to do his share of the world's work, and yet desires his share of the world's good. This is manifestly unjust. Those who will not work should not eat. (2 Thess. 3:10) Those who idle away their time are following the course that leads directly to poverty. (Prov. 20:4) They provide Satan with the best opportunity for tempting them to evil. When mind and hand are not busy With something good, the devil readily supplies them with something evil to do. Idleness is an exceedingly fruitful source of crime.

Diligence

Time is a precious possession. It should be properly used and not wasted. (Col. 4:5) When we are at work, we should concentrate our attention on our work, and not dawdle away the hours. Time once passed can never be employed again. The water that has passed through the mill will never come again to turn the wheel. If we desire to do the work allotted to us in the short space of time allotted to human life, we must be diligent. Whatsoever our hand findeth to do we should do with all our might; for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither we go. (Eccl. 9:10) We must work while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work. (John 9:4)

Faithful Work

We should be faithful and conscientious in doing our work. Whatever we do, we should do to the glory of God, (1 Cor. 10:31) and therefore to the best of our ability. A true Christian will perform his work just as well when

his employer is absent as when he is present. He knows that even if men do not see whether he does his work well or badly, God sees. Every task should be performed conscientiously, not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. (Eph. 6:6) It is dishonest to take full wages for work which has been neglected and improperly done. And if an article of trade is defective in workmanship, those who purchase it are defrauded of their money.

The gravest consequences sometimes follow from the failure of men to be reliable and conscientious in their daily work. The operator falls asleep at his post, and the train is wrecked and people are killed. A house or bridge is poorly built, and it breaks down. The majority of accidents, some of them truly appalling, if traced to their source, would doubtless be found due to a neglect of some one to do his duty.

We should be faithful in that which is least. For he Who is unfaithful in small matters is likely to be unfaithful in larger ones also. (Luke 16:10) We should be prompt, (Rom. 12:11) ready to accommodate others, and reliable in keeping our promises. We should be slow in making promises, and make them only when we mean to keep them and see our way clear to do so.

Employers

If we should happen to become employers of others, we should remember the common bands of humanity which unite us with those who labor for us. (Eph. 6:9) We should remember to love them as we love ourselves. (Matt. 22:39) We should not regard and use them as mere machines, but treat them in a spirit of Christian love and kindness, just as we ourselves would like to be treated, if we were in their place. (Matt. 7:12) Employers have as little right to oppress or be unfair to those under them, as employees have to defraud and neglect the work of those over them. If employers and employees always acted in a Christian spirit of love, the troubles between capital and labor would disappear.

38. Pleasure And Enjoyment.

The Christian has a right to enjoy himself. The sincerity of his religion is not to be judged by the solemnity of his face. But we must confine ourselves to such pleasures only as are innocent, indulge in them with moderation, and always make pleasure subordinate to duty. (Matt. 6:33) We are placed in this world not for the purpose of having as much pleasure as possible, but of doing our duty toward God and man.

A Religion of Joy

The Christian religion is one of joy. It is the Gospel, the good-news of salvation. The two great festivals of the Church, Christmas and Easter, come to us with the glad tidings, "Christ is born," and "Christ is risen." Faith in Christ produces joy in the heart. (1 Pet. 1:8) We are reconciled through Him with our heavenly Father, and are sure of God's love in this world and of eternal life in the world to come. This joy no man taketh from us. (John 16:22) The greatest blessing which it is possible for man to possess is ours by faith. (Rom. 5:1) Therefore we are called on to rejoice in the Lord and be glad in Him. (Ps. 32:11) We are to be of a cheerful and happy disposition. Our religion should make us so. And we should spread sunshine around us wherever we go.

Enjoying God's Earthly Gifts

While we rejoice above all in the spiritual blessings which are ours by faith, we are to rejoice also in the earthly blessings which God showers upon us so bountifully. If received in the right spirit, they are all meant to add to our happiness. We are to use this world, (1 Tim. 4:4) enjoy its innocent delights, and take our share in its innocent pleasures and amusements. God has

surrounded us with the good gifts of His mercy, and fitted our minds with capacity for an almost infinite variety of enjoyment. Games, music, art, the contemplation of nature, reading, conversation, each may become the source of pleasure to man. Taste, smell, sight, hearing, feeling, each of the senses may in turn be an avenue through which pleasure and enjoyment come to the soul. So long as we confine ourselves to pleasures that are not sinful, and keep within the bounds of moderation, it is right for us to enjoy ourselves. (1 Cor. 7:31) God wants us to be happy. And these pleasures of life are meant to lighten our sorrows and help us to bear our burdens. But we must always be on Our guard, not to exceed the limits of propriety and moderation. (1 Cor. 9:27)

Recreation

Some degree of pleasure and enjoyment is necessary for our physical and mental well-being; and children need more than adults. But mere pleasures should be in the nature of recreation from more serious pursuits. If they go beyond this, they become dissipation, and are sinful. We should never make pleasure the chief object of our life. To do so would be to make it our god. To devote too much of our time and strength to pleasure is to make us unfit for the duties and responsibilities of life.

Games for the sake of physical or mental exercise and recreation are right and proper. They become wrong, if playing them becomes a passion and time is wasted on them which ought to be spent to better purpose. (Eph. 5:16) Games of chance are not wrong in themselves. But they become sinful, if they are used for the purpose of betting or gambling. Gambling is a sin against the seventh Commandment; it transfers money from one person to another without the return of an adequate equivalent. Lotteries of any kind are sinful for the same reason, and doubly sinful if they are held for the benefit of a church, as they sometimes are. The Church should give the world an example of righteousness. (Matt. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:12)

Dancing is, to say the least, a questionable form of amusement, and in promiscuous assemblies it is to be condemned. It leads very easily to dissipation, and is apt to be detrimental to the health. On account of the late hours and the fatigue by which it is often followed, it is not a help but a

hindrance to the best performance of duty. On account of the moral perils and temptations which it involves to the young men and young women who are fascinated by it, it is a form of amusement which is of doubtful propriety. The modern style of dancing cannot be justified from the Scriptures. The dancing spoken of there is a dance of the women by themselves (Judges 21:21) and of the men by themselves, (2 Sam. 6:14) as an expression of joy. Worldliness, a frivolous spirit, and a lack of modesty in apparel and adornment can be justly charged against modern assemblies for dancing, even when it is declared by those who take part in them that “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life” are absent.

The Theater

The stage, instead of being, as it often claims to be, a teacher of morals, is often practically a teacher of immorality. Plays which make light of sin and offend the sense of modesty and decency should never be attended under any circumstances. And on account of the force of example, and the danger of giving offense to others (1 Thess. 5:22) or of encouraging them to go to improper plays — for there are multitudes who lack all sense of discrimination between good and bad plays, — it is a very serious question whether a Christian should feel himself at liberty to go to the theater at all.

Music

To those who have the faculty of appreciating it, music is one of the greatest sources of enjoyment. It has charms to chase away sadness and gloom, to fill the mind with noble thoughts, and to inspire to higher efforts. It has a refining and ennobling influence. Luther regarded music as next to theology. He declared, that it is a glorious and divine gift by means of which we can drive away many temptations and evil thoughts, and that the devil does not like music. It is one of the most wholesome forms of enjoyment and recreation; and those who have musical talent should cultivate it for their own sakes and for that of others. It is one of the ways in which we may help to make others happy. It should never be debased by being made the accompaniment to immoral words.

Music holds an important place in the services of the Church. In this respect it is a useful handmaid of religion. It adds to our joy in the worship of God by giving musical expression to our devotions. Music is one of the delights of heaven. (Rev. 14:2,3)

Painting, Sculpture and Architecture

Like music, these are fine arts, and may be made the handmaids of religion by aiding in the rearing and adornment of beautiful and attractive houses of worship. They should, however, remain handmaids. When they are seated on the throne, as they are in some churches, they usurp a position that belongs to God's Word alone. Those who have an eye for the beautiful will derive great pleasure from the contemplation of the works of the masters in these arts, whenever they have the opportunity.

Nature

There is no earthly joy sweeter, purer or more restful than that of the contemplation of the beauties of nature, which a merciful God has spread on every side of us. We should cultivate our faculty for appreciating them, and learn to take delight in their contemplation. God made the world beautiful for our sakes. The blue sky with its fleecy clouds, the golden glow of the sunset, the towering mountain peaks, the hills and valleys, the rolling plains, the fragrant woods, the waving grain, the winding river, the babbling brook, the spring by the way-side, and even the spreading trees, the green lawn and the blossoming flowers that grow before the door; — all these are objects of beauty, which are meant by a bountiful Creator to bring joy and delight to our hearts.

Conversation

One of the most common but valuable sources of pleasure and enjoyment at our command is that of conversation with relatives, friends and acquaintances. It is a recreation after work and an inspiration to new

endeavor. It is a means of living over again in the company of our friends the joys of the past. It enhances nearly all the joys of the present, because we share and speak of them with others. It opens up to our mind the treasures of knowledge, good-humor and experience stored in the minds of others. Our talent and appreciation for conversation should be cultivated. We should learn to be good listeners as well as good talkers. We should not permit ourselves to become incessant chatterers. (Matt. 12:36) Nor, on the other hand, should we be dull and morose in the society of others. We should not allow our conversation to descend to gossip, or slander, or frivolous jesting, or slang, or vile and filthy talk. (Jas. 1:26) Wit and humor should never be permitted to exceed the bounds of propriety, nor be indulged in at the expense of wounding any one's feelings.

Reading

Literature is another source of pleasure and enjoyment. It should be a source of profit also. (1 Tim. 4:13) We may sometimes read simply for the purpose of being entertained and amused, but not always. We ought to learn to take delight in reading books of a serious character, on religion, science, history, biography and travels, in order to inform and cultivate our minds. One who reads nothing but novels is bound to waste a great deal of time that ought to be better employed. He gets a view of life that is distorted and not at all consistent with the facts of every day life. He weakens his memory; for he does not read with the purpose of remembering, and therefore fails to do so. He warps his judgment, develops a sickly sentimentality, and deadens real feelings and sympathy for the sufferers in the world around him. He enfeebles his mind generally, so as to unfit him for the best work in his chosen calling. To read novels occasionally, as a relaxation from more serious pursuits or as a change from solid reading, may not harm. But to read novels chiefly, even though they be found in the libraries of the public schools or of the Sunday-schools or in reputable magazines, is a wrong against one's own mind and heart.

In reading literature, science. magazines and newspaper articles, we should bear in mind that, however beautiful in thought and sentiment, much of what we read is written by men and women who are moral rather than religious. Many of the world's great writers are not really Christians.

They may in a certain way believe in the Bible and accept the teachings of Jesus, especially what He says in the Sermon on the Mount; but it is only from the moral standpoint. They have not learned their sinfulness in God's sight, their need of humility and repentance, the righteousness and strict justice of God, their need of the redemption provided by the Saviour, the necessity of the use of the means of grace and of the agency of the Church in saving the world. We must recall this fact, when we meet with statements and ideas from the pen of poets, essayists and scientists, which are not in accord with the Gospel, and must not permit ourselves to be misled by errors in their teaching, however beautifully and forcefully those errors may be expressed.

The public schools of our land with their teachers and textbooks are not in a position to teach us religion. Church and State are separated in this country. In all instruction and reading under these auspices we must bear this enforced absence of religion in mind, and must not forget that the Word of God is the only light for our souls in life and in death. (2 Pet. 1:19)

39. Character.

Our character is what we are in our inner selves. Our habits, our thoughts, our motives, our principles, our virtues and vices, our ways of looking at things and of doing things, — all these taken together constitute our character. The thoughts we think and the deeds we do mold and shape our character continually for good or evil. A strong, well-formed, upright character is worth more to us than gold. A weak, vicious and corrupt character will land us in ruin.

The impression which our character makes upon others is our reputation our good or bad name. “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.” It secures us the honor and respect of our fellow-men; while a bad name or reputation brings humiliation, disgrace and punishment. We should seek to preserve our good name: and at the same time we should see to it that we be not hypocrites, but really be what we seem to be.

The Ideal of Character

The Ideal of Character is that presented to us by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It was perfect in beauty and strength. For in Him we see in their fulness all the virtues which should shine in us as the fruit of our faith. He was loving, humble, thankful, trustful, cheerful, patient, obedient, peaceable, gentle, kind, brave and courageous. The same mind which was in Him should also be in us. (Phil. 2:5)

The Foundation of Character

True character must be built up on the foundation of religion, and be based on the consciousness of responsibility to God. It must be developed through the power which God supplies to the believers. Unless it be built on the fear

and love of God, it cannot be relied upon to stand the storm and stress of temptation, but is a house built upon the sand. (Matt. 7:26,27)

The Formation of Character

We are born with sinful inclinations and are surrounded by the evil influences of the world. In the new birth we receive inclinations to good, and power to do what is right. The kind of character we possess depends on the result of the conflict between these powers of good and evil. If we permit ourselves to be ruled by the evil, our character will be bad. If we obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us, our character will develop beauty and strength. (2 Pet. 1:3-7)

Habits

For the development of a right character, the formation of correct habits is necessary. Wrong habits come to us naturally and easily, and are hard to break. Correct habits must be acquired by persistent effort. In order to form them, we need a strong determination of our will to do the right. We need to keep a constant watch upon ourselves, and correct ourselves the moment we do wrong. If we resist temptation, however difficult to do so at first, we gradually form the habit of right thinking and acting. Temptation loses more and more of its power as we become confirmed in habits of righteousness. (Jas. 4:7) Practice makes perfect in spiritual as well as in earthly things. The oftener we do the right, the easier it is to do it. But we must never cease to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matt. 26:41) And he “that thinketh he standeth must take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12)

Conscientiousness and Moral Courage

Conscientious fidelity to duty is a prime requisite for Christian character. We must set the will of God above all. Our own will and pleasure, popularity, gain, honor — all these things must yield before the obligation

to do right. We should stand up for truth and right even in the face of the whole world. (Acts 5:29) We should be ready to die rather than disobey our conscience, deny the truth, or knowingly do the wrong.

Conscience

Conscience is that voice within us which bids us do what we see to be our duty, and which upbraids us and fills us with dissatisfaction with ourselves when we do evil. (Rom. 2:15) A conscience which is obeyed becomes a more and more efficient guide and monitor. A conscience which is disobeyed gradually loses its power. Its voice is often smothered with all sorts of excuses for sin. In some persons it seems to be practically dead. They have gone so far and so deeply into sin, that their conscience does not seem to upbraid them even when they perpetrate the most horrible crimes. We should be careful not to harden our conscience by willful wrong-doing, lest we sink deeper and deeper into sin and be eternally lost.

Conscience Always to be Obeyed

We should never disobey our conscience even in matters which seem to be small. Evil gains control over men by gradual stages. Few realize as they should the peril of small sins, or ponder the fact that these are stepping-stones to larger sins. The history of notorious criminals will show that they gradually went from bad to worse till they reached a depth of iniquity at which the heart recoils. The way of sin is downward. The longer men descend upon it, the greater is the momentum which they acquire and the more difficult it is for them to stop. We must guard against the sins which appear small. They contain the germs of greater sins. Hatred is murder in the bud. Covetousness leads to dishonesty. Impurity of thought leads to impurity of action. Many men would have been overwhelmed with horror, if in their younger years they had been shown the wickedness of which they would later be guilty. (2 Kings 8:12,13) But they paved the way for their later wickedness by their earlier disobedience to conscience. We should guard against leaving a single weak spot in our character, — against leaving

a single sin condoned or a single evil inclination unsubdued. A whole chain is no stronger than the weakest link in it.

An Enlightened Conscience Needed

People sometimes do wrong because they do not know what is right. Paul, before his conversion, persecuted the Christians and imagined that he was doing God a service. (1 Tim. 1:13) His conscience needed to be enlightened. "Then it was enlightened and he learned that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, Paul ceased his persecutions and became a zealous preacher of the Gospel. (Gal. 1:13-16)

Duties never conflict. Only one thing is our duty at a particular moment. But on account of the dullness of our Spiritual sight, we often have difficulty to decide what that duty is. To prevent sins of ignorance we ought to attend the preaching of God's Word regularly, read and study our Bibles diligently, think seriously concerning the right and wrong of things, and in doubtful cases seek competent advice.

Perfection

None of us will ever in this world reach the perfection of character which is seen in Christ our Saviour. But we are to aim at such perfection. (Phil. 3:12) There is a relative perfection to which we can attain by persistent effort to think and do the right. (Col. 1:28) It is in this relative sense that the Bible speaks of the perfect man. (Ps. 37:37) To imagine that we are absolutely perfect is to act in the spirit of the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men are, and who thought that he actually did all and even more than God asked of him. (Luke 18:11,12) Such self-righteousness renders true Christian character impossible. For at the base of a right character must lie humility, the consciousness of our own sin and unworthiness, and the conviction that we are what we are only by the grace of God.

Our Friends and Companions

Our associations in life have much to do with the formation of our character. We unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less surely, imbibe very much of the spirit of our friends and companions. If they be people of the right kind, we are strengthened in our right life. But if they be wicked, our faith and conscientiousness become weakened by the force of their example and influence. Evil communications corrupt good manners. (1 Cor. 15:33) A companion of fools shall be destroyed. (Prov. 13:20) He will soon become like them. He will be judged by others as being implicated in anything that they do. Our reputation depends largely upon our associations; and our character does also. We should, therefore, be careful in the choice of our friends and associates. We are not to be intimate with the wicked, nor take pleasure in their society. (Ps. 1) We are to choose for our friends and companions those whose influence upon our own character will be for good and not for evil. At the same time we should be careful that our influence over them is for good also. For we all wield an influence for good or evil over every one with whom we come in contact.

What We Read

What is true of friends and companions is true also of what we read. Our reading influences us for good or evil. Books and newspapers have a character that is good or bad, just as people have. And our minds and hearts are molded and influenced by what we read, especially by that which we delight to read. What we read becomes in a sense a part of ourselves. If we read novels or other books or newspapers which make light of sin, speak slightingly of Christian faith and virtues, or which are impure, we cannot avoid being contaminated by them. They are poison to the soul, — a poison which once introduced can never be wholly eradicated. People would not think of eating or drinking a bodily poison to see how it tastes or acts. But many of them read poisonous books and papers, whose whole tendency is to undermine their Christian faith or to fill their mind with impurity. They do so on the foolish plea that it will not hurt them, or that they desire to become acquainted with life in all its phases. We ought to take no more delight in the company of infidels, crooks, robbers, murderers, adulterers and adulteresses when they come to us in this form, than we would care to

be found in their actual society. Their influence in the two cases cannot be radically different in kind.

Books and papers should be friends. And we should choose from among them only those which are worthy of becoming our friends because of the purity, nobleness and helpfulness of their contents. If they are not of this character, we should avoid them, as we would the society of wicked persons.

40. Love To All Men.

We should love our fellow-men as we love ourselves. (Matt. 22:39) This love is to be the evidence and proof of our love to God. (1 John 4:7,8)

The Universal Brotherhood of Man

The Jews and the Greeks felt themselves under no obligations of love or duty to those who belonged to a different race or nationality. But Christianity requires us to love all men. It emphasizes the universal brotherhood of man. All are descended from the same first parents and are of one blood. (Acts 17:26) All are loved by the same God (John 3:16) and have been redeemed by the same sacrifice on the cross. (1 John 2:2) The Lord is not a God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. (Rom. 3:29) He loves all, even His enemies. (Matt. 5:45) We should do the same; for we are to be like Him. (Matt. 5:48)

Our Neighbor

Our fellow-men are spoken of in the Bible under the term our neighbor. We are told to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This does not mean simply the person who happens to live next door to us or near us, or one with whom we are acquainted; but it means every man. By the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) the Saviour shows us, that our love to others is not to be limited by the narrow bounds of race or creed or similar considerations; but that it should include all men of every kind or class, and should prompt us to show kindness and extend needed aid to all. Even a worldly person is kind to his friends; (Matt. 5:46) but a Christian is to be kind to every one.

Love to All

We cannot, indeed, be on terms of intimacy and affection with all men. This is possible and desirable with only a few. But we are to be filled with Christian love or charity toward all. We are to wish them everything that is good in body and soul, and nothing that is evil. We are to desire and seek their welfare, just as we desire and seek our own. No one wishes himself any evil, because he loves himself. (Eph. 5:29) In the same way we should love others. We should take their advantage and happiness into consideration as well as our own. Love looks not only on its own things, but also on those of others. (Phil. 2:4)

The Importance of Charity

The three great and comprehensive graces of the Christian are faith, hope and charity (1 Cor. 13:13) or love. For the relation of men to men and their right dealings with one another, the greatest and most important of these is charity. (1 Cor. 13:13) It is the underlying principle and motive that should prompt all our thoughts and actions with regard to our fellow-men. Unless this Christian love or charity be present in our hearts, not only are our professions of religion vain, (1 Cor. 13:1) but our deeds of apparent kindness and mercy to others are nothing but a hollow pretense. Even though we should bestow all our goods to feed the poor, or give our body to be burned; if we do it from any other motive than Christian love, it profits us nothing. (1 Cor. 13:3)

How It Is Manifested

If we have this Christian love for our fellow-men, we will think, speak and act in kindness toward them always. We will be patient and long-suffering with their faults, (1 Cor. 13:4) and not be easily provoked by real or imaginary offenses against us. (1 Cor. 13:5) We will rejoice at their prosperity, and not envy them on account of it. (1 Cor. 13:4) We will never be proud, puffed up, or selfish, (1 Cor. 13:4,5) but always be gentle, courteous and considerate. We will seek to promote the welfare and

happiness of others even at the cost of self-sacrifice. (1 Cor. 13:5) We will never rejoice when others have met with misfortune or have fallen into sin, (1 Cor. 13:6) but pity them and help them upon their feet again. We will be slow to think evil of others or to impute evil motives to them, (1 Cor. 13:6) and be ready to give them credit for good intentions whenever it is possible to do so. (1 Cor. 13:7) We will gladly bear hardships and endure sufferings for the sake of promoting their good. (1 Cor. 13:7)

Love to Our Fellow-Christians

This love which we are to have toward all men is especially to be exercised toward our fellow-Christians. We are to do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10) If we love God above all, we shall be drawn toward those who also love Him. Since we are to love all other objects according to the relation in which they stand to Him, we are to love in a fuller sense those who are His friends. We are indeed to love all men, even our enemies, in the sense of wishing them well and seeking their good; but we are to have brotherly affection for our fellow-believers. (Rom. 12:10) They are united to us by a closer bond than those who are not Christians. They are children of God as well as ourselves; and therefore they are our brethren in a higher sense than those who are related to us only through the natural brotherhood of the human race. This love for our brethren in the faith is especially enjoined on us by the Saviour. (John 15:12)

Loving Our Enemies

Our love is not to be restricted to those who are kind and friendly to us, but should include even our bitterest enemies. It is the natural tendency of the human heart to seek revenge for injuries. The motto of the Jews was “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” (Matt. 5:38) They loved their friends and hated their enemies; (Matt. 5:43) and they taught that this was right. But Christ has taught us differently. We are not to harbor feelings of bitterness nor seek revenge for injuries done to us. (Rom. 12:19) We are to return good for evil, and love for hate. (Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:21) He

commands us, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44) If God had loved only those who love Him, we should all have been lost. But even while we did not love Him and were His enemies by sin, He loved and redeemed us. For “God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

Forgiving

We should always be ready to forgive those who offend us. (Matt. 18:21,22) Even if we are offended by the same person many times in a day, we are to forgive each time. (Luke 17:4) Our own offenses against God are so numerous and so great, that those of others against us are in any case few and small by comparison. Since God is willing to forgive us, we ought also to forgive one another. Unless we forgive others, God will charge up our own sins against us again. (Matt. 18:35) The servant who was forgiven by his lord a debt of ten thousand talents, and who then refused to forgive his fellow servant a debt of two hundred pence, was again called to account for his own debt and punished. (Matt. 18:32-34)

We are taught to pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” If we do not forgive others, we virtually pray that God should not forgive us. And the Saviour expressly assures us, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.” (Matt. 6:15) Our forgiveness must be from the heart. It is often difficult for us to forgive thus; but we should pray for grace and strength to do so.

Politeness

The highest form of politeness — a politeness which is not simply an outward veneer and polish — is that which flows forth from genuine Christian love to others. Love prompts us to be kind, considerate, courteous and obliging; in other words, to be polite. (1 Pet. 3:8) Politeness should be cultivated as a valuable and charming social grace; but we should see to it,

that it never degenerates into a mere outward semblance of courtesy, but expresses a kindness and good will which really exists in the heart.

Helpfulness

Love for our fellow-men will prompt us to be helpful to them in every way that lies in our power. We should not selfishly look only after our own interests and let others get along as best they may, but should be obliging and ready to give them every possible encouragement and assistance. (Phil. 2:4)

Mercy

Love will prompt us to be merciful to the needy, the helpless and the suffering. (1 John 3:17) This mercy is fully exemplified in the life of the blessed Saviour, who went about daily giving comfort and relief to the suffering and sorrowing. We should have pity (Col. 3:12) for the needs of others, both bodily and spiritual, and do all in our power to supply them.

A Good Example

There are few ways by which men can do more harm than by a bad example. Multitudes are led by it to temporal and eternal ruin. Love for others and a desire for their good requires of us, therefore, that we should so live in all things as to give them an example which they may safely follow. (Matt. 5:16)

The Golden Rule

A Christian's whole conduct toward his fellow-men is summed up by Christ in the Golden Rule which He has given us: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the

law and the prophets.” (Matt. 7:12 We should always act toward others as we would like to have them act toward us, if we were in their place.

41. Duties In The Family And Home.

The family is the first of the divinely appointed relationships of life. The ancients under-estimated both the individual and the family, and regarded them both as of importance only in so far as they formed a part of the State. But the Bible exalts the family. It places the family at the beginning of history. And at each step in the Old Testament promises of salvation, the family from which the Saviour should be descended is expressly named. It is in the family that our religious life is to be nurtured and developed, (Deut. 6:5-7) and its fruits first shown. A proper, well-regulated family life lies at the basis of all individual and national well-being. It is here that the foundations of good or evil character are laid.

Parents

The relation of parents to their children is the most divine which human life has to show. They stand to their children in the close bond in which God stands to all men and especially to the believers. For He is our heavenly Father. In dealing With their children, parents should copy after the dealings of God with men. They should love their children, care and provide tenderly for their bodily, mental and spiritual needs, teach them obedience, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4) Parents are invested with a large measure of authority, but also with a corresponding measure of responsibility. Immortal souls are entrusted to their keeping, to be fitted for a godly life here, and a happy eternity hereafter.

Providing for the Family

Upon the father and the mother falls the duty of providing for the temporal wants of the family: (1 Tim. 5:8) the father by his daily work, the mother by her care of the household. This provision involves the care of the children from the tenderest years of infancy till they are old enough to provide for themselves; and a tender solicitude for their welfare throughout all their life. Food, shelter, education, care in health and sickness, — these are provided by loving parents, often at the cost of self-denials and sacrifices which children do not understand, and which they can never repay.

Training the Children

The love which they owe their children requires that the parents should spare no efforts to train up their sons and daughters in the fear of God. On the father and the mother rests the responsibility of molding and developing the character of the child aright. Much wisdom and patient love is needed for this purpose. They should pray for these. (Jas. 1:5) They should bring their children to God in baptism in early infancy, (Mark 10:14) and, as they grow older, teach them the meaning of their baptismal covenant, instruct them in the Word of God, bring them to church and Sunday-school, send them to the parochial school if there be one, and seek to build them up in Christian faith and life. They should unceasingly pray for their children, that they may be kept from evil and sin. And they themselves should give a good example of right living, that the children may safely follow in their footsteps. A bad example is likely to counteract all the good teaching which parents may give. Piety should reign in the home. Father and mother should see to it that the Bible is honored and read, and family prayer offered. Habits of right thinking and acting should be formed in the child. The spirit that prevails in the home and the example and teaching of the parents will influence all the after life of the child, and shape his eternal destiny for good or evil. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6)

Punishment

The proper training of the child requires that he should be punished for disobedience and wrongdoing. (Prov. 22:15) To let him go uncorrected and unrebuked is a sin which will in the long run re-act upon the parents. David indulged his son Absalom, and reaped the fruits of his indulgence in Absalom's rebellion. (2 Sam. 15:10) Eli let his sons go unrestrained in their wickedness, (1 Sam. 3:13) and God punished both him and his sons with death. (1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 4:11) To refrain from inflicting deserved punishment is not love but cruelty to the child. It encourages him in the course of evil. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Prov. 13:24) To be compelled to punish a beloved child is painful to the parents themselves; but true love will punish nevertheless, for the sake of the child's future welfare. Punishment should not, however, be inflicted in passionate anger, nor be unjust or cruel. (Eph. 6:4) Behind the punishment the child should see the love of the parents, which is seeking his good.

Children

Next to God, children should honor, love, obey, and serve their parents. God has placed the parents in a position of authority. Their will is absolute law to their children, so far as it does not conflict with the law of God. They are God's representatives in the family for the maintenance of law and order in it. And He has given a special commandment charging children to honor their parents: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exod. 20:12) This is the first and only commandment with a special promise for its fulfillment. (Eph. 6:2) Its transgression is a correspondingly great sin. "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it." (Prov. 30:17) "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." (Deut. 27:16)

Honoring Our Parents

Children should show honor and respect to their parents. They should not think themselves wiser, nor make light of father or mother or of their words.

(Prov. 1:8) They should speak in respectful terms of their parents, look up to them, gladly learn from their wisdom and experience, take to heart their instruction, and follow their good example. To be saucy and disrespectful is a great sin, which God will not let go unpunished. If any son or daughter should go so far as to strike or curse his parents, the Old Testament prescribed that such a child should be put to death. (Exod. 21:15,17) And while that penalty is not inflicted now for such an offense, the fact that it was then inflicted on the Israelites by God's command shows the enormity of the sin.

Loving our Parents

We should love our parents and seek to please them. (1 Tim. 5:4) We should be careful never to give them cause for anxiety or sorrow. We should think of what they have done and still do for us, of the love and care which they have lavished upon us, of the sacrifices and self denials which they have made for our sakes; so that our love for them may grow deep and tender.

Obedience

We should obey (Col. 3:20) our parents, because it is our duty. But we should also obey them, because we love them. Love will make obedience a pleasure. Sons and daughters who grumble and complain when they are told to do or not to do anything, or who obey only because they must obey and are afraid of punishment, do not have the right love for their parents. They should obey promptly, willingly, cheerfully. Tardy, unwilling and grumbling obedience is virtual disobedience. Parents can take no pleasure in such compliance with their commands. Instant, unhesitating obedience to the parent's will should be given by every child, except in those rare cases in which a wicked parent commands a child to do something which is contrary to the will of God. (Acts 5:29)

Serving

Children should be ready not only to do what they are hidden to do, but should be ready and anxious to serve their parents at every opportunity without waiting to be told. They should aim to please and be helpful. Even though it be little that children can do, the sight of willing service on their part will bring joy and gladness to the heart of father and mother. And often children can do a great deal to lighten the burdens of their parents.

In Later Years

When children have become men or women, they should still honor and love their parents. Though we shall then in a sense have outgrown their authority, we should still seek to please our parents whenever possible, and listen respectfully to their advice. When they have grown old and helpless, we should love and honor them, patiently and tenderly care for them, and provide for all their wants. They cared for us in our childhood; we should care for them in their old age.

Grandparents and old persons in general should be treated with respect and honor. To despise and make light of them because they are old is a great sin. We should remember that we may grow old also, and should treat them as we would desire to be treated in their place. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." (Lev. 19:32)

Behavior at Home

All those virtues and graces which our Christian religion requires us to show in our daily life should be manifested first of all in our relations with the members of our own family. Some persons are kind and obliging to their friends and even to strangers, but are quite the contrary at home. This is altogether wrong. Of all the human beings upon earth, those of our own family should be the ones whom we love best, and toward whom we should show the most love by our actions. All the members of a family, father, mother, children, brothers and sisters, should form a unit of love and harmony. Quarrelsomeness, selfishness, anger, unkind words or actions should never be found there. All should be unselfishly devoted to one

another, be self-controlled, polite, considerate of one another's rights and feelings, patient with one another's faults, just to one another's virtues, and should willingly make sacrifices to promote one another's bodily and spiritual welfare.

42. Duties In The Church.

True membership in the Church of Christ confers upon us the highest privileges and blessings open to man in this world. It makes us God's chosen people, the special objects of His love and care. But it also imposes duties upon us.

Faithfulness

Our relation to the Church involves our relation to God, and is therefore to be placed above every other consideration. The Church must come first. We must be and remain Christians, no matter what it costs. Sacred as are our obligations and duties to the family and the State, those to the Church and through it to Christ are higher and holier still. While we are to love father and mother and brother and sister, we must love Christ more. (Matt. 10:37) While we are to render due honor and obedience to the State, (Rom. 13:1) we are to bear in mind that our allegiance to God is a higher and more sacred obligation. (Acts 5:29; Luke 20:25) This is a truth realized by the godly men of the Bible. Abraham forsook his home and kindred, in order to become the ancestor of the people of God. (Gen. 12:1-4) Moses severed his connection with the court of Pharaoh, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11:25) The apostles forsook all who were near and dear to them, in order to be Christ's disciples. (Mark 10:28-30) And when they had to choose between the Christian Church and their Jewish nationality, they unhesitatingly chose the former. Paul loved his own people, the Jews, tenderly; (Rom. 9:3) but he placed his relation to the Church higher, and devoted his life to the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, even though he incurred the enmity of his countrymen by so doing.

In modern times many of our German forefathers, the Huguenots and others had to give up their fatherland and emigrate to other countries, in order to be faithful to Christ. Our own land was largely settled by people who came hither because they were not permitted in Europe to serve God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

Love for God's Word

The Word of God is the chief means through which our faith is wrought and maintained. (Rom. 1:16) We should therefore love God's Word. And one of our chief duties as members of the Church is to attend its services regularly, and listen attentively to the preaching of the Gospel. No one can despise God's Word and remain a Christian.

The Sacraments

It is the duty of parents to bring their children to Holy Baptism at an early age. And those children who have been baptized should bear in mind the blessings which their baptismal covenant confers, as well as the vows which have been made in their name. "Then we have been confirmed, we should come to the Lord's Supper whenever it is administered, that we may derive from it the comfort and strength which God bestows in it upon the believer.

A Right Life

We should not be only hearers of God's Word, but doers also, (Jas. 1:22) and lead a consistent Christian life. Members of the Church — and this includes all baptized children — bring disgrace upon their holy religion and imperil their own salvation, if they fail to lead a Christian life. We are to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16) A right life on the part of those who belong to the Church is the strongest kind of a testimony to the truth and power of the Gospel. (1 Pet. 2:12,15)

Relation to Other Members

Members of the Church are to have brotherly love for one another. (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1) As members of the one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27) they should dwell together in peace, and work together in harmony for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. (1 Cor. 12:25) Quarreling and contention are out of place everywhere, but especially so in the Church. For by this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples, that we have love one for another. (John 13:35) Members should care for one another's spiritual and temporal welfare, and help to bear one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2)

Relation to the Pastor

The pastor is the ambassador of Christ, (2 Cor. 5:20) commissioned to proclaim Christ's will. He should be honored for the sake of the office which he holds. Those who hear him hear Christ, and those who despise him despise Christ. (Luke 10:16) When the pastor preaches the Gospel or in private speaks words of admonition, guidance or comfort, the Saviour speaks through him.

We should seek in all ways to help and encourage the pastor in his work. We should listen to his preaching, not for the sake of finding fault, but in order to profit by it. We should receive it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God. (1 Thess. 2:13) And because it is the Word of God, we should listen to it reverently, even though the preaching be accompanied by much human imperfection. If we are asked by the pastor to do any work for the Church, or if we see any way in which we may be helpful to him, we should at once and cheerfully do so. We should remember that he is human, and has his limitations as well as other people. We should bear with his shortcomings, as he must bear with ours.

Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons are elected for the performance of special duties in the Church. (Acts 6:1-6) They are to assist the pastor in the work of his office, whenever

he calls upon them; and they are particularly charged with the oversight of the temporal welfare of the congregation, the administration of its finances, the care of its property, and the relief of the poor and distressed. Together with the pastor, they constitute the church council or the executive body of the congregation. They are to set a good example to the other members of the Church.

The early Christian Church had deaconesses (Rom. 16:1) as well as deacons. In late years this office has been revived in our Church. Institutions have been established at which young women are trained for the work of a deaconess, — a work of love and mercy performed for Christ's sake. It is the work of ministering to the sick and needy, the neglected, the ignorant, the fallen, the friendless, both in institutions of mercy such as hospitals and asylums, and in congregations under the direct oversight of the pastor. The Church has need of many more consecrated young women for this work.

Care For Those Outside of the Church

We should not be satisfied with enjoying the blessings of the Gospel ourselves, but should earnestly seek to bring it home to the heart of all men. We should not be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:15,16) nor fear to speak its message to others. And we should use every effort to bring with us to the house of God the other members of our own family, our friends and our acquaintances. We ourselves should give them an example of love for the Gospel by our own regular attendance at services.

We should take a deep interest in the mission work of the Church at home and abroad. The command of Christ, to preach the Gospel in all the world and to all men, (Mark 16:15) lays an obligation upon every individual member of the Church to aid in spreading the Gospel.

The Lutheran Church

When the Christian Church had fallen into many errors of doctrine and practice, God raised up Luther, and through him and his co-laborers as His

instruments reformed and purified the Church in the sixteenth century. The sole authority of the Word of God was re-established, and the doctrine of justification by faith, as well as the other doctrines of Scripture which had become covered by a tissue of human traditions and ceremonies, was again proclaimed in its purity. Those who accepted the truth which Luther proclaimed were called "Lutherans by their enemies. They accepted the name, and our Church has borne it ever since, not because she believes in Luther, but because she believes in the doctrines which Luther taught. The name which her members chose for themselves is the Evangelical (or Gospel) Church. The two names are combined into Evangelical Lutheran.

Her Confessions

In order to bear testimony to the truth which she believes and teaches, our Church has adopted a number of creeds and confessions. She holds fast to the three oecumenical or general creeds of the Ancient Church: the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian. In addition to these she has adopted the Augsburg Confession, the Apology (or Defense) of the Augsburg Confession, the Smaller Catechism, the Larger Catechism, the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord. The three Oecumenical creeds, the Smaller Catechism and the Augsburg Confession are found in the Church Book.

In the confessions of our Lutheran Church the truth of God's Word is set forth and explained. They are drawn directly from Scripture and are strictly in accord with its teachings. She is not a new Church, originated at the time of the Reformation, but holds and teaches the same truth Which was taught by the ancient and apostolic Church, but which in the Roman Church had become obscured or replaced by errors.

Because her confessions are a correct exposition of God's Word, our Church requires that all teaching and preaching in her name shall be in accordance with her confessions. For this reason she does not permit those who are not Lutherans, but who believe differently and teach error on any points, to preach from her pulpits. (Gal. 1:9; Rev. 22:18,19)

Denominations Around Us

In the strict sense, the Church of Christ is one (Eph. 4:4-6) being composed of all who are true believers in Christ. But outwardly the Church, contrary to Christ's will, (John 10:16) is divided into many different churches and sects. There is but one faith true in all its parts; and all should hold it. But they do not. At the time of the Reformation the Church was already divided into two great branches: the Roman Catholic Church, which recognized the pope as the vicar of Christ on earth; and the Greek Church, which did not. When the Reformation took place, many held fast to their errors and remained in the Roman Catholic Church. And Protestantism itself became divided into two great streams, the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Churches. The Reformed Churches agree with us in some doctrines but disagree in others. The Reformed branch of Protestantism has been divided again and again into sects and denominations until their number is almost legion.

Relation to Our Own Church

While we should have love for the whole of Christendom and should acknowledge whatever good there is in other churches, our own Lutheran Church should be especially dear to us. She bore the brunt of the battle in the conflict with Rome and is the mother of Protestantism, to whom other Protestant Churches are very largely indebted for the truth which they possess. We should be proud of her history, and be thankful to God for the purity and scripturalness of her teaching. We should never permit ourselves to be drawn away from her by any attractions which other churches hold out to us. We should never forsake or deny the truth which she teaches. (Gal. 1:6-9) We should be loyal to her and never depart from her, unless she herself should depart from the truth of God's Word and forget her confessions in which that truth is set forth. We should pray and labor earnestly for her prosperity and increase. (Matt. 9:37-38) But we should not become proselyters, who are more anxious to add to her numbers than to spread the truth which she holds and teaches. We should be obedient to her rules and regulations, and adorn her pure teachings by a holy life.

We should gladly and willingly give according to our ability for the carrying on of her work in our own community and elsewhere. She needs money for her missionary and educational work. Without it, her interests

must suffer. If we love her as we should, we will gladly deny ourselves and make sacrifices in order to give liberally to her cause and aid in spreading the truth.

Other Churches

While we acknowledge whatever truth is found in other churches, we are not to be blind to their errors. Where they differ from our Church's teaching, they differ from God's Word. And we dare not regard these differences as unimportant. We dare not give up any part of God's Word, (Luke 21:33; Matt. 5:18) but must accept and defend the whole truth which it teaches. We should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) While we give the members of other churches credit for being honest in their convictions, we should not speak and act as if the difference between the teaching of their churches and ours were of no consequence. It is on such important matters as justification, baptism and the Lord's Supper that these differences exist; and they are of far-reaching importance. While we acknowledge their members as Christians, we do not admit them to the Lord's Supper with us, because they believe that in the Lord's Supper we receive nothing but bread and Wine, and because admitting them would imply that there was no difference between their faith and ours, or that the difference was of no consequence.

Outward union of the different churches is desirable only when there is internal unity of doctrine and belief. Without such inner unity, outward union would do no real good, but only harm. It would mean that the doctrines in dispute are unimportant; and this is not the case. We dare not treat the teachings of Scripture thus. (John 8:31) Purity of doctrine is the chief thing.

43. Duties Of The Lord's Day.

The proper observance of the Lord's Day or Sunday is essential to our physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

The Sabbath

In Old Testament times the seventh day of the week was observed as a day of rest by special command of God. After six days work of creation, God rested on the seventh day and hallowed it. (Gen. 2:2,3) And in the third Commandment He says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." (Exod. 20:8) On this day the Israelites were required to rest from all their labors, and turn their complete attention to God and what He had done for them. (Deut. 5:14,15) Its observance distinguished them from all other nations.

Sunday

The early Jewish Christians continued to observe the sabbath or seventh day of the week, as well as the other Jewish festivals. But this was not required of the Christians who were converted from among the Gentiles. The apostle Paul opposed all attempts to oblige the heathen converts to conform to the Jewish law. He maintained that Christ has freed the Christians from it. (Gal. 5:1) But while they were not bound to keep the seventh day of the week, the believers set apart the first day of the week in its stead for the worship of the Lord. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2) The first day of the week was chosen, because the two greatest events in the history of redemption took place on this day; namely, the resurrection of Christ from the dead on Easter and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The observance of this day had the sanction of the apostles, who were divinely inspired, and is

therefore in accordance with the will of God. It was called the Lord's Day. (Rev. 1:10)

A Day of Rest

Sunday should be a day of rest for body and mind. (Exod. 20:9,10) While God designs the day chiefly for our spiritual good, He has in mind our temporal welfare also. We need the rest, relaxation from work and recuperation of strength which come to us from one day's intermission of toil in every week. Those who disregard this beneficent arrangement of God wear out body and mind much sooner than they would, if they observed the day for rest.

Unnecessary Work Forbidden

On the Lord's Day only such earthly work should be done as is absolutely necessary, and cannot be done at any other time. (Luke 14:5) We should be careful not to neglect our work during the week, so as to oblige us to work on Sunday; and we should not imagine a necessity, when it does not really exist.

Works of Love by which we serve God and our neighbor may and should be done on this day. Any work which promotes the sanctification of the day, and thus helps to accomplish the purposes for which it is intended, is not a desecration but a keeping of Sunday. The work of the minister and of the sexton of the Church is of this nature. The visitation and nursing of the sick, the comforting of the sorrowing, the helping of the needy, the widows and orphans, and similar works of mercy are particularly appropriate on the Lord's Day. The Saviour healed the sick on the sabbath. (Luke 14:1-4)

A Holy Day

Sunday is meant chiefly for the good of the soul. It is a holy day, not a holiday. We observe it properly, not when we loll at our ease or spend the

day in sleep or amusement, but when we devote it to the spiritual purposes for which it is intended. We are to remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. We should therefore devote it to God and the things of God. We should spend it in such a way as will promote the growth of our religious life. Whatever hinders this spiritual growth is to be avoided as a desecration.

The Public Service

When Sunday comes, we should hasten with joyful footsteps to the house of God, to join in hymns of praise to His name, to bring our petitions before His throne, and to listen to the words of warning, comfort and guidance which the minister proclaims. We should love the habitation of the Lord and the place where His honor dwelleth, (Ps. 26:8) and should say with the Psalmist of old, “How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.” (Ps. 84:1,2) The earthly sabbaths are a foretaste of the eternal sabbath of heaven. (Heb. 4:9) If we do not take pleasure in the worship and service of God here on earth, how can we be fit to take part in His eternal worship and service there?

Attendance at Church

We should not neglect the public services of the Church, as the habit of so many is, (Heb. 10:25) but should attend them all unless we are unavoidably hindered. A reason which would not keep us away from work or a place of amusement is not sufficient excuse to remain away from the house of God. Necessary housework and other work should be so arranged as not to interfere. Visiting at the time of the public services should be avoided. And if others visit us, we should insist on their accompanying us to the house of the Lord. This they will usually do, if they see that we are in earnest. If they will not go along, we should present our apologies and leave them at home till we return. While we should be polite, we dare not set our obligations to men above our duty to God. We are to please God rather than men.

Behavior in Church

We should enter the church reverently, (Eccl. 5:1) remembering that it is God's house. As we take our places, we should utter a silent prayer that God may make the service a blessing to our souls. We should not chat with those who sit near us about secular affairs, nor whisper, smile or laugh during the service. We should not permit our minds to wander nor to be engaged with our own or other people's looks or appearance, nor to be occupied with worldly thoughts of business or pleasure. We should bear in mind the purpose for which we have come, confess our sins unto our Heavenly Father, receive the Absolution with believing hearts, join from the heart in the worship during all the hymns, the liturgy and the prayers, and listen attentively to the preaching of God's Word, applying its teachings to ourselves. We should make it a point to attend the Main Service in the morning, and not merely the Vesper Service of Praise without Confession.

The Sunday School

We should attend the Sunday school regularly, and display the same spirit of reverence and attention as in the church. Here also we worship God and are taught His Word. We should carefully study the lesson at home, pay strict attention while it is taught, and receive it into our heart and life. What is here taught is of the highest importance. The lessons we learn in the public schools are meant to fit us to grapple with the problems of our earthly existence. They are important. But those of the Sunday school are meant to fit us for a Christian life on earth and a happy eternity in heaven. They are, therefore, more important still.

The Sunday school is an aid to the Church in doing its work. But we must remember that the Sunday school does not take the place of the Church. We are not to imagine, that' going to Sunday school frees us from the obligation to attend church services. It does not. It should make us all the more anxious to attend the services of the church.

It is a mistake to attend two Sunday schools of different denominations. On account of the different doctrines taught on some points, such a course leads to confusion of religious ideas and belief. Go to your own Lutheran Sunday school, and use the time when the other Sunday school meets to study your lesson at home.

The Lord's Day is Profaned by those persons who keep their stores and shops open, and by all who do unnecessary work on Sunday. Many individual employers and corporations compel their men to work on the Lord's Day, when such work is not really necessary. By so doing, they prevent hundreds and thousands of workmen from going to church, and breed an indifference to the church in many others. This is a great sin; and those who are responsible for it must give an account to God.

The Lord's Day is profaned by anything which hinders its object from being accomplished in the heart. Staying away from church and Sunday school, occupying the mind with worldly affairs before going to church or after coming home so that the Word of God is not heeded or remembered, or spending the day in worldly amusements or worldly reading.

One of the greatest profanations of the Lord's Day is the reading of Sunday newspapers. It keeps multitudes of people away from church; and it prevents multitudes of others from deriving any benefit from the service, because they fill their mind with the worldly and often frivolous and immoral knowledge of the Sunday newspaper before they go or after they come home, and thus make the Word of God of none effect. We should not buy or read the Sunday newspaper, and thus help to profane the day of the Lord. We should be careful also in the books which we read on Sunday, so that they may not unfit our minds for properly hearing and meditating upon God's Word. Church papers, religious books, and especially the Bible itself should be read.

The Church Year

There is a Church year as well as a civil year. The Church year commemorates the great facts of the Gospel and of our redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. Each Sunday in the year has its own particular name, which is given in all church almanacs and in some others. The Church year begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and falls into two great divisions. The first half, reaching from the first Sunday in Advent to Trinity Sunday, contains all the great festivals of the Christian Church. The second half, beginning on the first Sunday after Trinity, contains no festivals except the distinctively Lutheran festival of the Reformation on October 31st. The

order of the Church year is as follows: The four Sundays in Advent, Christmas, New Year, Epiphany (on January 6th), from two to six Sundays after Epiphany according as Easter comes early or late; the three Sundays called Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima; Ash Wednesday or the first day of Lent; six Sundays in Lent, the last of which is Palm Sunday; Holy Week, in which occurs Good Friday; Easter, five Sundays after Easter, Ascension Day, the Sunday after Ascension, Pentecost or Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, and the Sundays after Trinity, numbering from twenty-three to twenty-seven. Each Sunday has its own particular Gospel and Epistle lesson, which is read at the morning service, and its Introit and Collect. These may be found by referring to the Church Book under the name of each Sunday.

44. The Study Of The Scriptures.

In comparison with other books, the Bible is as rare and precious as a diamond among pebbles. It sparkles and shines with the lustre of perfect truth. It contains the true wisdom for all times; for it makes wise unto salvation. (2 Tim. 3:15) It is adapted to the wants and understanding of all classes of people. It contains depths which the mightiest intellects cannot fathom, and yet gives light and understanding to the simple. (Ps. 119:130) It makes him who is versed in its teachings wiser than the most learned philosopher or scientist who has not studied them. (Ps. 119:99,100) It is a light to the benighted traveler, (Ps. 119:105) a balm for wounded hearts, (Ps. 119:50,92) a water of life to quicken the weary spirit. (John 4:14) It is the Book of books,¹ and our one safe guide for time and eternity.

The Food of the Soul

The Word of God is the food of the soul. As the body cannot thrive without a daily supply of nourishing food, so our soul cannot grow and increase in strength unless it feeds upon the Word of God day by day. Only by the daily use of the Scriptures can we be built up as we should be in the inner man, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. (2 Pet. 3:18) A Christian who does not read and study his Bible will necessarily be weak and flabby in his spiritual fiber.

The Importance of Bible Study

There is no book so worthy of our study as a masterpiece of literature,² and so necessary to be studied for the sake of our own well-being as the Bible.

Only from its pages do we learn how to be at peace with God, to serve Him on earth and to dwell with Him forever in heaven. It is through the Scriptures that our faith is formed, and through them that it must be increased and strengthened. We should, therefore, not only go regularly to hear the Word of God preached in the public services, but should also diligently read and study the Bible for ourselves.

The Example of Christ

It is evident, that Jesus studied the Scriptures and was thoroughly at home in them. Even in His Childhood's days we find Him in the temple, sitting among the doctors of the Scriptures, both hearing them and asking them questions. (Luke 2:46) When tempted in the wilderness, he always had the right verse of Scripture ready to parry Satan's attack. (Matt. 4:4,7,10) His thorough familiarity with the Word of God is apparent from His exhortations in the synagogue and from all His public discourses. He frequently quoted from the Old Testament. He lived in the Scriptures. His cry of anguish on the cross was couched in the words of the Psalmist. (Matt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1) And if Christ, who is Himself the Truth and the Life, studied the Scriptures, surely we have need to do so. He commands us, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me." (John 5:39)

Daily Reading of Scripture

The Bible should be read regularly every day. (Ps. 1:2) As with every other study, interest in the Bible increases in proportion as we devote our attention to it. No study would be interesting, if taken up for a few moments at a time after long intervals. In order to delight in the study of the Bible and derive real profit from it, we should read it daily.

System In Reading

In reading the Bible, we should do so systematically, and not at random. Some good plan should be adopted and followed. One of the best systems for daily reading is that given by the Daily Lessons in the Church Book. These Daily Readings, together with additional topical subjects, may be found also in the Scripture Lesson Quarterly.³

Reading With Devotion

We should not permit our reading of the Scripture to degenerate into a mere perfunctory habit, but should read with devotion for the purpose of strengthening our spirit. We should take up our Bible reverently and prayerfully, read with faith, and apply what we read to our own heart and life. (Ps. 119:11) And when we close the Book, we should keep in mind what we have read, meditate upon it, study its lessons, and obey them. (Ps. 119:9,15,16)

Regularity

We should have a regular and set time for this reading of Scripture, whether it be morning, noon or evening, or all three. A few minutes a day can be devoted to it by all, even by those who are most busy. It may often be done on the way to or from work. Pocket Testaments useful for this purpose can be bought for five cents. Unless there be a set time, this daily Bible reading will often be pushed aside and neglected; and the spiritual strength gained will then be just as unreliable as the physical strength gained by eating irregular meals. But if a regular time for reading be fixed upon and adhered to, a large amount of instruction and strength will be gained in the course of the year.

Memorizing Scripture

The words of Scripture should, however, not only be read, but laid up in the heart and soul. (Deut. 11:18) Many of its passages should, therefore, be memorized. Care should be exercised in selecting these, so as to choose

those 'which will be most useful for our guidance and comfort. Single verses like John 3:16 and Rom. 5:1, or paragraphs like the twenty-third, the forty-sixth and the ninetieth Psalm, the Beatitudes in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and Paul's description of Christian love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians may be selected. We should seek to have a ready and accurate command of a large number of strong Bible texts. By memorizing a little every day and fixing the passages in our mind by frequent repetition, we will accumulate a treasury of Scriptural knowledge that will be invaluable for our defense of the truth, for our own spiritual growth, and for our comfort in life and in death.

Family Reading of Scripture

All who begin married life should have family worship at the most convenient hour in the day. At this time a portion of the Scriptures should be read. (Deut. 11:19) ⁴ It would be well to have every member of the family come to family worship prepared to recite a short passage of Scripture. In this way the memorizing of Scripture and its devotional use could be combined.

The Use of Scripture in Church

The Word of God is read and preached to us every Lord's Day in church. The passages of Scripture which occur in the liturgy, and the Gospel and Epistle lessons for the Sunday should become deeply embedded in our life. When the minister proclaims God's Word from the pulpit, we should listen intently. And when we arrive at home we should look up the text of his sermon in the Bible, and study the connection in which it stands there.

In the Sunday School

The Sunday school is held for the purpose of systematic instruction in the Bible. All should take part in it, and find interest and profit in the lesson. If possible, they should seek to become teachers; for in no other way can we

learn so much of Scripture as in conscientiously endeavoring to teach it to others.

Systematic Study

There are a number of effective methods of studying the Scriptures. It will be well to pursue one method for a considerable time, and then take up another.

The easiest method, and the one which it is most plainly our duty to undertake, is the weekly study of the Sunday school lesson. There is a certain order in the selection of the portions of the Scripture given in the Sunday school lessons; and if each part be faithfully studied, the result in the course of years will be the mastery of a large part of the Bible.

The Bible may also be studied by books. First of all, the order in which the books occur in the Bible should be firmly fixed in the mind. Then there should be some idea, such as will be given in the textbook of next year's course, by whom and when they were written. When pursuing this method of study, large parts of a book in the Bible should be read at a single sitting, and the fundamental thought of the book be grasped. We should then write out the main thoughts of the book from memory.

Another method which may be pursued is to study the Bible by topics, and thus learn what it teaches on particular subjects. For this method we should have a concordance and subject-index. By pursuing this plan of study all teaching may be tested by the Scriptures.

A Biblical Library

We should form a library for Biblical study. All our Sunday-school literature should be kept and bound, or bound textbooks purchased. The graded textbooks will lay the foundation of a library to which, if we have studied them well, we can always refer with the greatest profit. You should look in the Sunday-school library and in public libraries for books that will be of help to you in Bible study. If possible, you should add to your library a good, reliable commentary.⁵

The chief book in your Biblical library will, of course, be the Bible itself. Each person should own a Bible for his own individual use. In purchasing one, you will do well to choose one with large, clear type and with marginal references, even though such a one costs a little more. One that also contains a concordance, maps and other helps for study will be still more useful. You should always use the same book if possible, so that you may become familiar with the page and spot at which a particular passage is to be found, and you should mark those passages which strike you as being of special force and importance.

1. There is but one Book — Walter Scott.↵
2. The Bible grows in beauty the more we understand it — Goethe.↵
3. The Daily Bible Readings may be obtained separately by writing to the Publication Board whose name appears on the title page of this book. The Lutheran Church Almanac also contains Bible Readings for each day.↵
4. A large number of books have been published for use in the reading of Scripture at family worship, and can be procured on inquiry at bookstores. The daily readings suggested by the Church Book or the Church Almanac may also be followed.↵
5. The Lutheran Commentary on the New Testament, and Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary on the whole Bible, will prove valuable.↵

45. Truthfulness.

Truth is of God; (Deut. 32:4) lying is of the devil. (John 8:44) God does not and cannot lie; (Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18) and we should be like Him. We should, therefore, be truthful in word and action, and never permit ourselves to be guilty of hypocrisy, deception, misrepresentation, double-dealing, prevarication or lying. (Col. 3:9)

The Importance of Truthfulness

Men are mutually dependent upon one another. Without truthfulness nothing but confusion could prevail in human affairs. All confidence and honor among men would be at an end. Doubt, distrust, uncertainty would be everywhere. We could never believe anything, or place any reliance upon anybody. We could not take another's person's word for even the simplest facts. All the relations of life would be broken up.

The Sin of Lying

A lie is a conscious falsehood, uttered with intent to deceive. It may be spoken or acted; for we can deceive by our actions (Prov. 6:13) as well as our words. A liar is an abomination in the sight of God (Ps. 101:7) and of all right thinking men. He is included among other gross sinners in the list of those who shall be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 21:8) A lie is never justifiable. We should never plead necessity as an excuse. If we find ourselves in a predicament, whether by our own fault or not, we should never try to get out of it by lying. Lying of any kind is sinful. It displeases God, and copies after the devil who was a liar from the beginning. It undermines the truth, weakens our own character and does harm to others. One' lie usually has to be followed by many more, in order to cover it up.

The Example of Christ — Truthfulness

Truthfulness is seen in all its fulness in the character and life of our blessed Saviour. He never voluntarily or involuntarily misrepresented Himself or anyone else or any fact. There was never the least taint of insincerity, affectation, guile or hypocrisy in anything that He said or did. (1 Pet. 2:22) His words expressed the exact state of His thoughts and feelings. His acts corresponded precisely with the real state of His mind and heart. His views and statements concerning any person or thing contained the exact truth (John 18:37) concerning them. He saw and described things just as they are. He was not only true, but the Truth (John 14:6) itself.

Seeing Right

If our ideas and views concerning people and things are wrong, we will give expression to the false even when we imagine that we are expressing the truth. We should, therefore, free our minds from prejudice and bias, (Matt. 7:5) and train ourselves to see right. We should look at a whole subject and not only at a part of it. We should regard people's virtues as well as their faults, and strike a proper balance. If we permit ourselves to be swayed by our likes and dislikes instead of by calm reason, our estimates of persons and things will be false, and our opinions and judgments unjust.

Sincerity

We should not only try to see right, but should give truthful expression to what we think. We should not think one way, and speak and act as if we thought quite differently. Our words and actions should truthfully express our thoughts and convictions. What we appear to be should correspond with what we really are. We should not feign thoughts, feelings and opinions which we do not possess. We should be sincere, and not deceitful or hypocritical. (1 Pet. 2:1) We should be absolutely truthful and without dissimulation (Rom. 12:9) either in speech or action.

Speech

The gift of speech as an expression of intelligent thought distinguishes man from the brute. It is a glorious and divine privilege, but imposes a corresponding responsibility. It is a blessing or a curse, according to the use that is made of it. We may by a word give pleasure or pain, console or distress, help or discourage, strengthen or Weaken, build up in the faith or tempt and lead into sin. We should, therefore, never be rash (Eccl. 5:2) in speaking, but be careful not to talk too much, (Prov. 10:19) not to speak in unkindness, and not to utter what is untrue.

A word once spoken abides long after the sound of its utterance has died away. Its memory often lingers in the mind. And even if the word be forgotten, the effect which it produced remains, and exerts an influence for good or evil upon the person who heard it, and through him upon others for all time and all eternity. This is true of all speech, whether oral, written or printed. On the day of judgment our words will justify or condemn us; (Matt. 12:37) for what we say is an index of what we are. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt. 12:34)

The Truth About Things

In speaking with others about things, we should be careful to state only what is true. (Eph. 4:25) What we are not sure of as a real fact, we should not speak of as if it were. We should not conceal a part of the truth while pretending to give it all, nor add any surmises of our own without stating that they are merely surmises.

We should speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15) Telling the truth in anger or in a loveless spirit of fault-finding will do more harm than good. It is sometimes necessary to say what may cause present pain to others, in order to do them a real kindness. (Gal. 4:16; Prov. 27:6) But they should be made to see that we mean it for their good, and have no desire to exalt ourselves above them. (Gal. 6:1)

Our Convictions

We should be true to our convictions of truth and right, and should have the moral courage to defend them. This is especially important with respect to the truth of God's Word. (Jude 3; Rev. 3:11) A noble example of such courage and faithfulness was given by Luther at the Diet of Worms, when he preferred to be put under the ban of the empire and risk the loss of his life, rather than to be untrue to his convictions or deny the truth of God by recanting what he had spoken and written. We should confess and defend the truth of God's Word at all hazards.

Promises

When we have made a promise, we should scrupulously endeavor to keep it. If we do not, we virtually tell a falsehood, prove ourselves unreliable, and destroy other people's confidence in us. We should be as good as our word. To make a promise which we know beforehand we cannot keep, or which we do not intend to keep, is lying.

Excuses

People are often ready with all sorts of excuses for broken promises and for wrong-doing of any kind. Such excuses frequently have a large element of insincerity and untruthfulness in them. We should guard against the habit of making excuses. We should not excuse our wrongdoing at all. It is not something to be excused, but to be repented of. And failure to keep a promise is excusable only when unforeseen events actually hindered us in spite of our best efforts.

Apologizing

As soon as we see that we have committed a wrong against any one, we should apologize. Truthfulness requires it. For if we know that what we have done is wrong, and yet let it stand as if it were right, we act a lie. Unless we apologize and seek to make amends to those whom we have wronged, we cannot stand in the right relation to God. (Matt. 5:23,24)

Secrets

We have no right to divulge the secrets of other people. “A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” (Prov. 11:13) We are not to connive at sin nor to conceal crime. But we are bound to respect other people’s secrets when they concern no one but themselves. Friends often confide to one another things which they do not want everybody to know. He who divulges such secrets betrays another’s confidence, and renders himself unworthy of friendship.

The Truth About Persons

We should be particularly careful to Speak only the truth about persons. The eighth commandment expressly forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbor. (Exod. 20:16) To Speak falsehood about another and rob him of his good name is to rob him of that which is more valuable to him than money. (Prov. 22:1) A slanderer is worse than a thief.

Judging Others

We should be careful not to do injustice to others even in our thoughts. The Saviour warns us against unkind and untruthful judgments. (Matt. 7:1-5) We should not be ready to impute evil motives to others or to look on the dark side of every thing that they say or do. We should regard them in the best light possible. We should not excuse or condone sin. But at the same time we are not to be unjust and unkind in our judgment of the sinner. We should give others the benefit of the doubt as long as possible, and should believe evil of them only when their guilt is established beyond all question.

Avoiding Slander

We should never invent evil reports about others, nor help to circulate those which we hear. (Exod. 23:1; Lev. 19:16) The slanderer and traducer is a serpent in the form of a human being. The misery and heart-ache which is

caused by such persons is incalculable. (Prov. 11:9) We should be as anxious to guard the good name and reputation of others as we are to protect our own. We should defend those whose character is unjustly assailed. And we should beware of persons who delight in speaking evil to us about others. They will likely serve us the same way when we are out of their sight.

Praising Others

We should never flatter other people by magnifying their virtues and performances. (Job 32:21; Ps. 12:2,3) But when our 'own mind tells us that another's action merits our praise, we are not dealing truthfully with him if we refuse to bestow it. We should not, in a spirit of envy (1 Cor. 13:4; Jas. 3:16) and selfishness, belittle the virtues and efforts of others, but gladly give them the proper credit. Fault-finding discourages, and flattery pulls up with conceit; but just praise is a spur to greater effort in well-doing.

46. Property.

The earth and all it contains was given to man at creation as his possession, (Gen. 1:28) subject, of course, to the higher ownership of God, (1 Cor. 10:26) who is the absolute possessor of all things. Whatever each person lawfully acquires of the earth's lands, forests, water, mines, houses, goods or money is his property.

How Acquired

Property may be rightfully acquired by original claim of public lands where the law makes provision for such claim, by inheritance from relatives or friends, by gift, or by labor of mind or body. For most people, the last way mentioned is the only one by which they can hope to secure property. It is the way which God desires all to adopt; for He has commanded man to work and subdue the earth, and He regards idleness with displeasure. (Gen. 1:28; 2 Thess. 3:10) Honest labor coupled with economy in expenditure is the best and surest way to acquire property.

Unequal Division

The property of the world is very unequally divided among men. Some own much, others own very little. God distributes to men according to His pleasure and wisdom. "The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; He bringeth low and lifteth up." (1 Sam. 2:7) Even with equal effort and care, men will not become equally rich. There will always be some who are poor. (Matt. 26:11)

Much of the difference in earthly possessions is due, however, to men themselves. One who is lazy, idle, extravagant or careless in the management of his money will never acquire much property. Industry and

thrift are necessary. (Prov. 10:4) Many a person bewails his poverty and envies those who possess more worldly goods, when he has no one to blame for his poverty but himself. If he worked as hard as those whom he envies, and saved his money instead of wasting it and squandering it upon his own pleasures, he might soon become relatively independent, if not rich.

Community of Goods

It is maintained by some people, that all property ought to be divided equally among all men. And they sometimes appeal to the action of the early Church (Acts 2;44,45) in proof of their contention. But the community of goods which existed among the early Christians was a voluntary and not a compulsory community. They put their money into a common treasury out of love for those who were brethren with them in Christ. They did not do this because they believed that the possession of property was wrong. They were not obliged by their religion to sell all that they had, or to give into the common treasury the proceeds of such a sale. (Acts 5:4) It was altogether a matter of their own free choice, and was done from the promptings of love. Ananias and Sapphira were stricken with death, not because they were unwilling to put all their money into the treasury, but because they lied about it, and said that they had given up all their money, while in reality they had retained a part of it. (Acts 5:1-10)

Communists and socialists would compel an equal division of property among all as a matter of right. And the example of the early Church, therefore, gives no support to their contention. Anarchists would go a step farther, and not only abolish all property rights, but all law and order as well.

Even if an equal division of the property of the world were made today, in a short time the idle, the improvident and the extravagant would have spent theirs all, and be clamoring for another division. The industrious would have to labor for the support of the lazy, and the thrifty and economical toil for the improvident and extravagant.

God's Purpose

The unequal distribution of property is part of God's plan with men. He orders our lot for the best. And if we do our duty, such a share of the world's goods as He wishes us to have will come to us. Riches and poverty are each in their respective spheres meant to accomplish His purposes. (Rom. 8:28) The needs of the poor are meant by Him to furnish occasion for the exercise of Christian love and benevolence on the part of those more richly blessed with this world's goods. He who has two coats is to give one to him who has none. (Luke 3:11) That some are left to want for the necessaries of life, and perhaps to die of starvation or cold, is due to the sin and selfishness of those on whom God has laid the obligation to provide for them.

The Love of Money

The great aim of many people is to be rich, as if there were nothing to be compared in value with wealth, and as if the mere possession of riches would make them happy. But money cannot bestow happiness. And there are many other things of this world, such as health, education, honor and love, which are of more value than wealth. The welfare of the soul is of infinitely more importance. (Mark 8:36,37) "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15) The chief thing is to be rich toward God. (Luke 12:21) Our treasures are to be gathered in heaven, and not here on earth. For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. (Matt. 6:19-21) Those who permit themselves to be ruled by the love of money expose themselves to the greatest perils. "For the love of money is a root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6:10) Money properly used can be made the root and source of a great deal of good. But the love of money is a great evil. It drives the love of God from the heart, and prompts to almost every kind of sin against our fellow-men: envy, covetousness, fraud, theft, robbery and murder.

Riches

Wealth is sometimes ill-gotten, having been accumulated by means of fraud, deceit, oppression, violence, or other unfair means; but not always. Many rich persons have acquired their wealth honestly and fairly. Some of the most godly men of the Scriptures, like Abraham, (Gen. 13:2) were very wealthy. And it is possible for men to become rich and yet remain good Christians. But if riches increase, we must beware not to set our heart on them. (Ps. 62:10)

Riches are very uncertain. They “make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” (Prov. 23:5) Many a person is rich one day and poor the next. Those who have riches must be constantly on their guard, if they would keep what they have; and often all their care and foresight are of no avail. Their wealth is the object of envy on the part of many of their fellow-men, and is at any moment likely to become the prey of thieves, swindlers, defaulters, and embezzlers, or to be lost by an unexpected turn in human affairs.

The Temptation of Riches

It is possible for rich persons to be saved. Of this fact Abraham again is an example. (Luke 16:22) But riches make men’s salvation more difficult. Christ says that 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. (Matt. 19:24) This is because of the great and peculiar temptations to which wealth exposes men. They are tempted to trust more in uncertain riches than in the living God; (1 Tim. 6:17) to be proud and high-minded; to employ their wealth in the gratification of their own pleasures, rather than in the service of God and their fellow-men; and to live as if self-gratification and not duty were the chief end of man. The Word of God is often completely choked by the deceitfulness of riches. (Matt. 13:22)

The Responsibility of Riches

The possession of wealth involves a vast responsibility. It is a trust received from God, and must be used in accordance with His will. A strict account must be given to Him for the use that is made of it. Those who are rich are

commanded to be “rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;” thus “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Tim. 6:18)

Poverty

The poor have many trials and hardships to endure. But if they are righteous, they are the special object of God’s care. (Ps. 37:25) The poor may be happy as well as the rich. “Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” (Prov. 15:16,17)

The poor are specially mentioned in the Scriptures as the ones who have the Gospel preached to them, (Matt. 11:5) and as the ones whom God has chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him. (Jas. 2:5) They are exposed to less temptations. Their very poverty makes it easier for them to be true Christians, by teaching them to look to God’s mercy and help for the supply of their needs.

Neither poverty nor wealth in itself saves or condemns any one. Lazarus was not received into Abraham’s bosom because he was poor, nor the rich man condemned to hell because he was rich. (Luke 16:19-31) Lazarus was saved because he trusted in God; and the rich man was lost because he was wrapped up in self, cared not for the needs of the poor, and had no fear of God before his eyes. But the poverty of the one was more favorable to godliness, and the riches of the other formed a constant temptation to worldliness. God keeps many a man poor, because riches would prove his spiritual ruin, while poverty turns his thoughts to God. As long as the prodigal son was rich, he remained impenitent and worldly; when he became poor, he repented and turned his footsteps homeward. (Luke 15:11-24)

The Most Desirable State

The Most Desirable State is one in which we are neither rich nor poor. It is the state least exposed to temptation. Thus Solomon prayed: “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient 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.” (Prov. 30:8,9) True happiness is not dependent on riches or poverty, but on contentment joined with godliness. (1 Tim. 6:6) Contentment with our lot as God shapes it, whether for wealth or poverty, and a life of faith toward God and of good will to our fellow-men, — this alone can make us truly happy.

How Treat Rich and Poor

We should value men for what they are, and not for what they possess. (Jas. 2:1-4) It is character and not money that should count. We should not be dazzled by the glitter of gold and condone in the rich what we condemn in the poor; nor should we be filled with envy and condone in the poor what we condemn in the rich. Our estimate of men should be impartial, whether they be rich or poor. We should not despise nor flatter either. All are brethren, and all are miserable sinners, who can be saved only by the grace of God in Christ. “The rich and poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all.” (Prov. 22:2) “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we shall carry nothing out.” (1 Tim. 6:7) All the distinctions of wealth and poverty perish at the grave, and they do not during men’s lifetime weigh in God’s estimate of them. The important question is not whether we are rich or poor, but whether we are believers or unbelievers.

47. Honesty.

Money and property are necessary for the support of our earthly existence. But they must be honestly acquired. (2 Cor. 8:21) And the Christian religion requires us not only to abstain from all gross forms of dishonesty, but from those more subtle forms which are regarded by the world with indulgence, if not with approval.

Dishonesty Forbidden

The seventh commandment says “Thou shalt not steal.” (Exod. 20:15) And the apostle exhorts us, “Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” (Rom. 12:17) God desires that every man shall be protected in the possession of that which is lawfully his own. And the State seeks the same end when it provides laws for the punishment of robbery, theft, fraud and other forms of dishonesty. Without such protection the industrious and thrifty would be at the mercy of the lazy and wicked. If men could be robbed with impunity, it would be useless for them to labor. They would not be able to enjoy the fruits of their toil.

Gross Dishonesty

Dishonesty appears in many forms in men’s dealings with one another. Its grossest and most patent forms are robbery, theft, burglary, embezzlement and forgery. These are forms of dishonesty recognized and shunned by all who have any touch of religion or any shadow of self-respect. Their inevitable result is shame, disgrace and punishment.

Other Forms

But there are many other forms of dishonesty of which men are guilty, and which are just as real in the sight of God and of right thinking men as robbery and theft. It is dishonest to conceal property stolen by others, or to buy it of them when we know that it was stolen. (Lev. 6:2) It is dishonest to keep what we find without seeking to discover the owner, or to refuse to restore it to him when we know to whom it belongs. (Lev. 6:3) It is dishonest to evade the full payment of taxes to the government on any property which we possess; (Rom. 13:5-7) to borrow with the intention of not repaying; (Ps. 37:21) to live extravagantly and thus incur debts which we cannot pay; to live in idleness or beggary when we are able to work; to bet or gamble, and thus gain possession of other people's money without giving them an equivalent in return; to carry on protracted litigation in the courts, and thus put others to unnecessary expense; to be negligent or careless in the management of funds or property entrusted to us, and thus cause financial loss to others; (Lev. 6:2) to travel on the railroad or electric cars and evade the payment of our fare.

The Prevalence of Dishonesty

Dishonesty is widely prevalent in forms which the law cannot readily apprehend, but which are none the less guilty on that account. The man who acquires gain by selling inferior articles and charging the same prices as others charge for good ones; (Amos 8:4-7) the man who adulterates the goods which he manufactures or sells, or gives short weight or short measure; (Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1) the man who takes advantage of another's ignorance or need, and charges an exorbitant price for his goods, or an exorbitant rate of interest for the loan of his money; the man who corners the market, drives up prices, and enriches himself at the cost of his fellow-men's necessities; the man who withhold: from his employees a part of their wages on various false pretenses, or who refuses to pay them a just and fair price for their labor; (Jas. 5:4; Deut. 24:14,15) the man who is unfaithful in his work and accepts full wages for what he has done very imperfectly; (Col. 3:22) the man who requires a bribe for doing what is right, or accepts a bribe for doing what is wrong (Is. 5:23; Deut. 16:19; Ezek. 22:12,13) — all these are guilty of what is dishonest, as well as the man who breaks into your house at night and steals, or who holds you up on

the highway and demands your money or your life. The dishonesty is less gross, less apparent, but none the less real. And God, who sees all things and requires that we should “provide things honest in the sight of all men,” will call such persons to a strict account.

Its Source

Dishonesty has its source in the covetousness and greed of the human heart. (Mic. 2:2) Many people are so greedy of gain, that they resort to all sorts of questionable means to acquire it. Covetousness lies at the bottom of every dishonesty, whether gross or refined. The sin begins with the covetousness. Whoever covets is a thief at heart. And unless the covetousness is subdued, it quickly leads to dishonesty in actions. So important is it to subdue the covetousness of the heart, that God has given us two commandments, the ninth and the tenth, which say: “Thou shalt not covet.” (Exod. 20:17) If we would be strictly honest in all our dealings, we must overcome every prompting of covetousness within us. (Heb. 13:4)

We should also avoid everything that would tempt us to acts of dishonesty. Evil companions, idleness, speculation, and extravagance in living have proved the ruin of many a one. Gambling, which is itself dishonest, has often led to theft and forgery.

The Curse of Dishonesty

The curse of God rests upon all forms of dishonesty. The Bible has threats not only for the robber and the thief, but for all who practice fraud in any shape or who take advantage of others in dealing with them. It says: “Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his; (Hab. 2:6)” “Woe to him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong.” (Jer. 22:13) Thieves, covetous persons and extortioners shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:10)

Returning Stolen Property

Whatever has been dishonestly acquired should be restored to its proper owner in true repentance. And he whose eyes have been Opened to the dishonesty and sinfulness of any course which he has followed should at once forsake it. This was the course pursued by Zaccheus the publican when he was converted, (Luke 19:8) and is the course required of every one who has been guilty of dishonesty. “Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” (Eph. 4:28)

Strict Honesty Demanded

We should be scrupulously honest in thought and deed, (Matt. 16:26) and never appropriate a cent or a cent’s worth of property which is not lawfully and honestly ours. It matters not how many other persons permit themselves to be guilty of questionable and dishonest methods of gain, we must not follow their example. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” (Exod. 23:2) Anything which approaches fraud, or any taking advantage of a fellow-man in dealing with him, should be shunned. It is important to be absolutely honest even in small things. We should never permit ourselves to appropriate articles of even insignificant value on the plea that they will not be missed or needed by their owner. Small acts of dishonesty are stepping stones to larger ones. He who is unfaithful in that which is least will be unfaithful also in that which is much, if temptation and opportunity come. (Luke 16:10)

What God wants, and what the world needs, is men and women, and boys and girls who are honest to the core, who cannot be bought at any price, nor be turned from the path of absolute rectitude by any rewards which a course of dishonesty may offer. To be scrupulously and strictly honest will oblige us to relinquish many sources of profit which others employ; but we shall have what is more valuable than money, a clean conscience and the favor of God.

Caring for Others’ Interests

The love which we owe to our fellow-men requires that we should look after their interests as well as our own. (Exod. 23:4,5) We are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and do to him as we would have him do to us. (Matt. 7:12) Instead of seeking to gain wrongful possession of another's property, or of taking any advantage of him in our dealings, we should be anxious rather to promote his prosperity, and assist him in keeping what is lawfully his own. We should consider his rights as well as our profits, (Lev. 25:35,36) and let love and not greed be the guiding principle of our action.

48. The Right Use Of Money And Power.

All things in the universe belong to God. Consequently all that we possess is His also. All our money and property and all our powers of body and mind are simply a trust which He has committed to us, and for whose right use He holds us responsible. (Luke 19:12-27; Matt. 25:14-30) We are His stewards, and must give an account of our stewardship. (Luke 16:1-8)

Money or Property

Money is power for good or evil. If we make it our servant, it will be a power for good. (Luke 16:9) If we permit it to make us its servants, it will be a power for evil. It is a blessing or a curse, according to the use that is made of it. It belongs to God, and should, therefore, be used for the accomplishment of those purposes which God desires.

Our Earthly Needs

Money is required for the purchase of the necessities of life for ourselves and those who are directly dependent on us. It is right, therefore, to use it for this purpose. "If anyone provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8) Food, clothing, shelter, education, a reasonable amount of pleasure, — these are things which are necessary for our earthly wellbeing. Nor is it wrong in itself to add such comforts and luxuries of life as our means and our duty in other directions allow. But we must be careful not to regard our money as something which is absolutely our own, and which we may lavish as we please on the things of this world Without regard to the

needs of the Church and of our fellow-men. We are only the stewards of God, and dare not use our stewardship selfishly and carnally.

The Church

We have spiritual as well as bodily needs. (Luke 12:15) These needs are supplied by the Church, as the human instrument ordained by God to apply the redemption of Christ to our souls. Our spiritual needs are our chief needs, and their supply should be our chief concern in life. (Matt. 6:33) Religion is the one thing needful. We should, therefore, give liberally to the support of our church. Those who hear the Gospel are in duty bound to support those who preach it to them. (1 Cor. 9:14) Through the minister of the Word we receive spiritual gifts, and we are, therefore, commanded by the apostle to give of our earthly goods in return. (Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:11) In addition to the salary of the pastor, there are other expenses which each congregation must meet. Houses of worship must be built and kept in repair; the sexton must be paid for his services; and fuel, light and music must be furnished. All these things cannot be done without the financial support of those who belong to the church. The Church needs our gifts, in order that it may carry on its work and continue to supply our spiritual needs, as well as the spiritual needs of the members of our family and of other people who live in our community. To refuse to give, or to give grudgingly, is sinful.

The Needs of Our Fellow-men

We are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. (Matt. 22:39) And we are, therefore, in duty bound to care for the needs of others as well as for our own. Those needs, like our own, are both bodily and spiritual.

The Poor we always have with us, and should do good to them. (Mark 14:7) There are hungry to feed, destitute to clothe and shelter, orphans and widows to care for. True religion requires that we should do all in our power to alleviate the sufferings and supply the wants of our fellow-men. (Jas. 1:27; 1 John 3:17) The greater the means which God has entrusted to us, the more He expects us to give. To whom much is given, of him much

shall be required. (Luke 12:48) But even if we do not possess wealth and are poor ourselves, we are nevertheless bound, by the love which we owe to our fellow-men, to do all that lies in our power to assist and help those who are in need. There are some who are still poorer than we are, and we should help them according to our ability.

The aid which we extend to our fellow-men must be imparted judiciously, and may be given privately or through the establishment and support of hospitals, asylums, orphanages and similar institutions of mercy. We should remember, that what we give to the poor we lend to the Lord, and that He Will amply repay the loan. (Prov. 19:17) What we do or neglect to do for our fellow-men, we do or neglect to do for Christ; (Matt. 25:40,45) and we shall be rewarded accordingly on the day of judgment.

Missions

We should be concerned not only for the bodily needs of our fellow-men, but especially for their souls. The Lord wants all men to be saved, (1 Tim. 2:4) and has commanded that His Gospel should be preached in all the world. (Mark 16:15) We should be anxious for the salvation of others as well as for our own. And for this reason we should give liberally to the cause of missions, and thus do what lies in our power to bring the blessed tidings of the Gospel to all.

The mission work of our Church is divided into two great branches: Home Missions and Foreign Missions. The work of home missions is to gather into the fold of the Church those of her members who have been scattered abroad in our own country in places where there is no Lutheran Church, or none in which the Gospel is preached in a language which they understand, or where the membership is as yet too small to support a church without the aid of others. The work of foreign missions is to send out missionaries to heathen countries to preach the Gospel to those who still sit in the valley of the shadow of death.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35) And we should count it a glorious privilege to be able to use our earthly means for the purpose of bringing the Gospel to others, and thus hastening the time when

every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:10,11)

Proper Giving

What we give to the Church or the poor we should give directly to those objects. Fairs, suppers, sociables and similar schemes, so often used to raise money for the Church or benevolence, are not proper methods. The man who goes to a fair or a supper and buys something there cannot, by any process of reasoning, be said to have given anything. He has simply paid for something which he has received. Giving to the Lord and to the poor has the promise of God's blessing. (Luke 6:38) But we must really give, and not imagine that what we spend in such ways is giving. Our gifts should be an offering of love, given without looking for any other return than the approbation of God and our own conscience. (Luke 14:12-14; Luke 6:35)

Liberality

We should not only give to the Church and to the poor, but we should give cheerfully. "God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) And the promise of His love should urge us to give thus. We should not give grudgingly, or because we cannot easily escape giving something, but give gladly and liberally. (2 Cor. 9:6) "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11:24,25)

Of those who are wealthy God expects large gifts to the Church and the poor. And from each He expects gifts according to their ability. (1 Cor. 16:2) If we can afford only small gifts, but give in proportion to our means, our gifts are just as large in God's sight as those of persons who give more because they can afford more. (2 Cor. 8:12) The widow who cast into the treasury her two mites gave more than all the rich persons who had put in large sums; because they gave of their abundance, while she gave all she had. (Mark 12:41-44) We should be careful, however, not to give stingily and then seek shelter behind "the widow's mite." We do not give "the

widow's mite," unless we give all we have. We should give liberally; but we should do so out of love to God and our fellow-men, and not in order to gain applause from men for our liberality. We should not let the left hand know what the right hand doeth; and God, who seeth in secret, shall reward us openly. (Matt. 6:1-4)

All Our Powers

Not only our money, but all our powers of body and mind are to be placed in the service of God and our fellow-men. These powers also are a trust committed to us by God; and we are responsible to Him for their proper employment. We should cultivate the talents and powers which God has bestowed upon us, so that they may reach the highest degree of efficiency; and we should use them in the service of God, (Luke 19:22-23; Matt. 25:27) and never in the service of sin. If God has given us a good voice, ability to think and speak, fair business talent, power to interest children, a sociable disposition, a fine education, sound bodily strength, influence in the world and in life, or any other gifts, we should gladly place the same at His service and disposal. We should not hide our talent in the napkin of sloth or idleness, but be active in the employment of our opportunities for doing good. Whatever be our position or calling in life, we should not permit ourselves to become selfish or worldly, but throw the weight of our power and influence on the side of faith and righteousness. God has a great purpose to accomplish on earth. That purpose is to bring all men to faith in Christ and build them up in Christian life. His purpose should be our purpose. And every power and every opportunity should be diligently employed for its accomplishment.

49. The Sacredness Of Human Life.

Human life is sacred; and its sacredness is guarded by a special commandment of God: “Thou shalt not kill.” (Exod. 20:18) We should do nothing to shorten our own life or that of others. To destroy any human life, even though it be very young or yet unborn, is a great crime. Both the Word of God and human laws prescribe that the murderer shall be punished with death. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” (Gen. 9:6)

Why Sacred

Life is man’s most precious earthly possession, without which he cannot enjoy any other. To slay a human being is to put a sudden and unlawful end to his earthly career, to prevent the completion of his lifework, and to interfere with God’s plan for him. God breathed into man at creation the breath of life; (Gen. 2:7) and no one but God, who gave the life, has the right to take it away. He made man in his own image; and therefore anyone who kills a human being commits an offense against the majesty of God Himself. (Gen. 1:27; 9:6)

The Causes Which Lead to Murder

The Causes Which Lead to Murder are various. Cain killed Abel from anger and hatred. (Gen. 4:1-8) Joseph’s brethren plotted to kill him because they were filled with envy. (Gen. 37) Herodias caused John the Baptist to be slain for revenge. (Matt. 14:3-11) Judas became the betrayer and murderer of the Lord for the sake of gain. (Matt. 26:14-16, 49) David plotted and

carried out the murder of Uriah the Hittite in order to hide past sin. (2 Sam. 11) Drunkenness, jealousy, rivalry, and robbery often lead to murder. The seeds of murder lie in all these causes which we have enumerated. We should therefore guard against permitting them to find lodgment in us.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15) at heart, and is regarded as such by God, even though fear of punishment and other considerations may keep him from carrying his hatred to its logical conclusion. Hatred is murder in the germ. And many a one has nourished and fed his hatred till it ripened into actual crime.

Other Forms of Killing

Outright murder is only one way in which human life is destroyed. Death often results from carelessness in the handling of firearms or of dangerous implements and-machinery, from defective workmanship in many branches of labor, from negligence of employees on railroads and elsewhere, and from neglect of proper precautions against accidents of various kinds. Those through whose fault such loss of life occurs are accountable for their fellow-men’s death.

Hurting or Injuring Others

Hurting or Injuring Others in any way; tempting them to useless and hazardous undertakings in which they perish; enticing them upon the path of drunkenness or some other evil course which leads to their ruin; requiring too heavy work of children; compelling employees to labor incessantly without allowing them sufficient time for rest and sleep; fretting, annoying, tormenting and worrying others, and thus embittering and shortening their life, — all these and similar acts are offenses against the sacredness of human life. We should not, by anything which we do, shorten the life of a fellow-creature. Children who are rebellious and disobedient often bring father and mother to an early grave by their sinful conduct. Worry and anxiety wear out life faster than hard work, and are often as directly fatal as disease. (Gen. 37:31-35)

Self-Defense

The law recognizes our right to defend our life when it is unjustly assailed. There are a few cases in which it is necessary to take another person's life in order to save our own to kill in self-defense. But even then it must be as the very last resort. We dare not attack another human being, unless it be the only possible way to defend ourselves against him. Often a killing in so-called self-defense might have been avoided and some other method of safety pursued, if the one who was in danger had had a little more faith in God, had been less moved by passion or fear, or had not acted so rashly and hastily. It is a dreadful thing to have to take the life of a fellow-being even in self-defense.

War

As a last resort to maintain the right and to uphold what is more valuable than the life of the individual, war is justifiable. God assisted the Israelites in their just wars against their foes. It is our duty to defend our country with our life. But wars that are undertaken without just cause, and waged from vanity or for the sake of aggrandizement, are simply brutal murder on a large scale. Rulers of a nation have a vast responsibility in this respect, and are bound to do all that they honorably can to prevent war. If the spirit of Christ permeated all men, wars would cease forever.

Duels have very properly fallen under the condemnation of public opinion in most countries. It was manifestly absurd as well as sinful to endeavor to establish the right or wrong of a question by a duel, in which the victory did not and could not always fall to the one who was right, but to the one who could most dexterously handle the pistol or the sword. A man who kills another in a duel is guilty of murder.

Hurting or Killing the Soul

Since the soul is more important than the body, it follows that to hurt or kill the soul is worse even than bodily murder. "Love worketh no ill to his

neighbor” (Rom. 13:10) either in body or soul. We should be extremely careful not to injure or destroy our neighbor’s soul by teaching or maintaining falsehood and error, by tempting him to commit sin, or by enticing him to evil by our conduct and example. (Matt. 18:6,7)

Guarding and Preserving Human Life

Christian love will prompt us not only not to harm our neighbor, but to do all we can to protect his life from harm, to ward off everything that would tend to shorten his life, and to help him in time of need. (Luke 10:30,35) If through our fault or neglect others are left to suffer and perhaps die, God will hold us accountable for it. We are bound by our duty to do all that lies in our power to help those whose life or welfare is threatened by want or danger. (Matt. 22:39; Matt. 7:12)

Suicide

Not only the life of others, but our own life must be regarded as sacred. The same reasons which forbid murder forbid suicide also. Every other sin leaves people time to repent; but suicide leaves none. He who commits it, forces himself unprepared into eternity and before the judgment-bar of God.

Causes Which Lead to It

In spite of the fact that God has implanted the love of life in every human heart, many people wickedly destroy themselves. Discouraged and disheartened by the trials of life, made wretched by their own sins or the cruel treatment of others, filled with despondency by ill-health or reverses in business, covered with disgrace by their own crimes, or overwhelmed with remorse of conscience, (Matt. 27:3-5) they give way to despair, and instead of seeking the forgiving and sustaining grace of God and bearing the ills of life bravely, they foolishly and wickedly seek relief in suicide.

Foolish

There could be no act more foolish than that of the man who kills himself to escape from trouble. He plunges into infinitely greater trouble in the next world. God will call him to account for his act of self-destruction, as well as for every other sin. The folly of suicide is so great, that some claim it can be committed only by one who is at least temporarily insane. No doubt in some cases this is true. But not necessarily in all. It is doubtless often done in spite of better knowledge and in defiance of God. We are not to pass judgment upon others, and are to take as charitable a view of them as possible. But at the same time, we are to see to it that we realize the enormity of the offense, and never permit ourselves to be swayed by motives which would prompt us to suicide. We should keep the fear of God ever before our eyes. And if we are threatened with despair, we should turn to the Word of God for comfort and strength. If we ever fall into disgrace by our sins, we should sincerely repent, and make a new and right start in life.

Cowardly

Suicide is not a brave but a cowardly act. He who commits it leaves others, his relatives and friends, and perhaps a helpless wife and children, to face the world which he feared to face, and to bear not only the burdens which he shrank from bearing, but the additional disgrace of his cowardly act.

Shortening our Life

Many people, without committing direct suicide, shorten their life in many ways. Some perish in useless and foolhardy undertakings; some hasten their death by a life of impurity and sin against the sixth commandment, or by drunkenness and gluttony; and others shorten their days by overwork, needless exposure, carelessness, neglect of the proper rules of health, irregular hours of eating and sleeping, giving way to violent outbursts of anger, needless fretting and worrying, or by a life of carousing and dissipation. Life is a precious gift of God; and it is our duty to take proper care of it, so that we may perform the full life-work which God has given us to do.

Giving Our Life for Others

Christ gave His life for us. We should be willing to risk and give up our life for others. (1 John 3:16) The soldier who risks his life for his country and fireside, and dies upon the battle-field or in the hospital; the man who perishes in an attempt to save another's life from peril by fire or water or other cause; the man who exposes his life to administer medicine, spiritual comfort or nursing to those who are ill of contagious diseases, — these men, following the course of duty which love to our fellowmen points out, do not commit suicide, but on the contrary perform acts of heroism which are commendable in the sight of God and man. We can give no higher proof of our love for our fellow-men, than to die for them. (John 15:13)

The man who dies as a martyr rather than deny the faith, not only does not commit sin, but gives the highest and final proof of his devotion to God and duty. (John 12:25; Matt. 10:39)

50. Purity Of Body And Soul.

The Saviour says: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) And His words imply that those who are not pure, but permit themselves to delight in all manner of impurity, shall not see Him. God is holy; and we are to be holy, because He is. (Lev. 19:2) He has given us the commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" (Exod. 20:14) and in many places in the Scriptures He has threatened punishment against all who are impure and unchaste in heart or life.

In Heart

The heart is the source of all evil lusts. (Matt. 15:19) We should, therefore, first of all earnestly endeavor to keep it free from impure thoughts and desires. (Prov. 4:23) We should not for a moment permit our minds to dwell upon or take delight in thoughts which would bring a blush to the cheek, if they were known to our parents or to others whom we love and respect. Those who harbor impure and unchaste thoughts poison their soul, weaken their will, sap their mental and physical energy, diminish their usefulness, and unfit themselves for that success in life which they might otherwise attain. Impurity of mind and lustful desires are in themselves a transgression of the sixth commandment. (Matt. 5:28) And if not subdued, they soon lead to impurity of word and deed.

In Words

We should be careful in all that we say, and particularly careful not to utter what is immodest and unchaste. Vile talk, shameless jests, ambiguous and suggestive words, filthy jokes or stories, and all manner of uncleanness (Eph. 5:3-4) should be avoided, as we would avoid a poisonous serpent.

Impurity is more venomous than the serpent's tooth. We should never engage in nor listen to any conversation which we would be ashamed to have our parents or anyone else overhear.

In Deeds

We should bear in mind that God constantly sees all our actions, however hidden they may be from the eyes of men. (Ps. 139:1-12) Every deed of impurity and unchastity, every act that must be hidden in secrecy for shame of our fellow-men whose good opinion we value, should be shunned. Our body, as well as our soul, belongs to Christ, and is to be kept holy and pure. (1 Cor. 6:19-20) We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. (Rom. 12:1) We dare not yield our bodies to uncleanness. (Rom. 6:13) The apostle exhorts us: "Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be named among you as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting." (Eph. 5:3-4) And he warns us: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ...of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21)

The Curse of Uncleanness

God does not let those who live in impurity and uncleanness of heart or life go unpunished. Mind and body are always weakened by this sin. And often the penalty is a broken constitution, shameful disease and an early death. In the world to come the punishment is eternal death, and ceaseless torment by those lusts and corruptions to which men have yielded here. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:17)

How Guard Against

We should guard against and subdue the very first promptings of lust within the heart. We should turn our mind away from them to thoughts of good. We should watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation; because the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matt. 26:41) We should avoid all things which have a tendency to incite to impurity: such as evil company, books and other reading matter that is immoral, lewd songs or pictures, immoral plays, idleness and intemperance.

Marriage

Marriage is the union of one man and one woman in the bands of mutual love and faithfulness. It was instituted by God Himself in the garden of Eden. For God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a help meet for him." So God made Eve, and gave her to Adam as his wife. (Gen. 2:18,22) Thus the first marriage was solemnized, and the first human family founded.

Instituted by God, and sanctioned by the Saviour who performed His first miracle at a wedding, marriage is a holy estate. Not all are called to be married. But those who teach that celibacy, such as that of monks and nuns, is a holier state than married life, teach an error which is expressly condemned by Scripture. (1 Tim. 4:1-3)

Its Object

God instituted the state of marriage in order to promote the temporal and eternal happiness of the human race. The relation between husband and wife should be that of pure and true love, like the relation between Christ and His Church. There should be perfect mutual trust and community of interests. They should live together in love and concord, and labor together in harmony for the proper training of the children which God gives them. Together they should rejoice in all life's joys, and together bear all its burdens. Together they should worship and serve God, and cheer and sustain one another in a life of faith.

An Indissoluble Bond

Marriage is a covenant of God entered into voluntarily by one man and one woman; but once their vow is made, it is irrevocable. (Matt. 19:6) Nothing but death can ever lawfully part them. Marriage should, therefore, not be entered upon thoughtlessly or hastily, but with proper forethought and in the fear of God. It is a most important step in life, and means lasting happiness or unhappiness. Those who contemplate such a step should pray that God may guide their choice and grant His blessing. Marriage between near relatives is forbidden by the Word of God. (Lev. 18)

Harmony of Ideas

Not all persons suit together for man and wife. For true happiness in married life, harmony of religious and moral ideas is necessary. Marriage between those who are of a different faith, for instance between a Christian and a Jew or a Christian and an infidel, cannot bring a high order of wedded bliss. The marriage of Protestants with Roman Catholics should be avoided on account of the widely divergent views and teachings of their respective Churches on vital points of doctrine and life. Even marriages between Protestants of different denominations possess a measure of peril. The ideal marriage is one which results in an agreement of thoughts and ideals in husband and wife; and this is not possible, unless they hold the same faith.

It is important also that husband and wife should possess, as much as possible, the same grade of intelligence, so that there may be mutual respect, mutual appreciation of one another's views, and mutual sympathy in one another's undertakings.

For Love

Marriage should not be entered upon for the sake of convenience, for financial or social advantages, to please friends or relatives, nor simply on account of admiration for physical beauty. It should be the result of true

love, (Eph. 5:25) based on those qualities of mind and heart which each beholds in the other.

Parents' Consent

The essence of marriage consists in the consent of those who are to be married. But children should take into consideration the wishes of their parents, and pay attention to the advice which their wisdom and experience gives. If, on the one hand, parents sometimes seek to interfere with marriages which are right, a heeding of their wishes and counsel would, on the other hand, prevent many thoughtless and unhappy marriages.

The Blessing of the Church

Marriage is valid if performed by a civil magistrate. But in this important step, Christians should seek the religious ceremony and the blessing which the Lord pronounces upon them through His ordained servant. A religious ceremony gives the newly married couple to one another as a gift of God.

As marriage, however, has a civil as well as a religious side, the laws of the State must be strictly obeyed.

Relation of Husband and Wife

The man is the head of the family (Eph. 5:22) but he is not to be a tyrant. (Col. 3:19) He is to give to his wife the place and honor which are due to her as his helpmeet, and as an heir together with him of the grace of God. (1 Pet. 3:7) This he will do, if he has love for her. Woman is not to be man's slave, but his companion and dearest earthly friend, for whose sake he will leave father and mother, and cling to her. (Matt. 19:5) They are no longer two, but one; (Matt. 19:6) with a common love, a common life, a common property, common children, common hopes and endeavors, and a common Saviour. They should be patient with one another's faults, just to one another's virtues, mutually esteem one another's good qualities, and try to overcome their own failings. They should unselfishly seek one another's

happiness, and in so doing will promote their own. They should live together in mutual love and faithfulness till parted by death.

Divorce

Man and wife are one flesh; and what God has joined together, no man may put asunder. (Matt. 19:6) The marriage relation cannot be broken or dissolved without sin against the sixth commandment. And any divorces which are granted for any other reason than for unfaithfulness on the part of husband or wife are invalid in God's eyes. The Saviour says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery." (Matt. 19:9) Even when a divorce is granted on Scriptural grounds, only the innocent party has a right to be married again. The State often grants divorces for other causes than that allowed by the Saviour. But the Church dare not sanction such action by remarrying those who are thus divorced. She cannot add the blessing of the Lord to that which He condemns in His Word.

51. Duties As A Citizen.

As Christians, we owe duties to the State, as well as to the Church, the family, and mankind in general. The Saviour commands us to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. (Matt. 22:21)

Government Is Divine

The State is God's minister to regulate the temporal affairs of the human race, to protect the good and punish the criminal. Law and order are of God. (Rom. 13:3,4) They prevail in heaven, and are to prevail also on earth. "There is no power," that is, no government, "but of God.

The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Rom. 13:1,2) Anarchy and lawlessness of any kind are of the devil. He is the originator of disobedience and lawlessness.

Its Object

The object of the State is to preserve order, peace and justice among men; to confirm to each of its citizens those rights which belong to him'; and to restrict his liberty in those things which concern not only his own welfare, but that of his fellow-men. Certain inalienable rights God has given us as individuals: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, the right to acquire and hold property, and freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. These rights as individuals, as well as our rights as members of the Church and of the family, the State recognizes and protects. It does not confer them. They belong to us. The office of the State is to safeguard these rights against the aggression of others. And its manner of

fulfilling its obligations must be impartial, without respect to the wealth or rank of its citizens. (Deut. 1:16,17) For the law-abiding, government is a minister of good; for the evil doer, it is a “revenger to execute wrath.” (Rom. 13:4) “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.” (Rom. 13:3)

Obedience to Its Laws

So long as the laws of the State do not conflict with the law of God, it is our duty to render implicit obedience to them. We are to submit to them, not simply from fear of punishment, but as a matter of conscience (Rom. 13:5) for the Lord’s sake. (1 Pet. 2:13) Obedience is necessary for the preservation of law and order in the affairs of men. Insurrection and rebellion against the government are sinful. (Rom. 13:2) If the government is defective, we dare and should seek to improve it by peaceful and lawful means, but we dare not try to overthrow it. We should never do anything to hinder the Operation of its laws, but in every way endeavor to have them carried out. We should by our speech and behavior foster a spirit of respect for law and order. Lynching and similar methods of taking the law into our hands are lawlessness and disobedience. Those who resort to them try to punish one crime by committing another.

God’s Law Higher

If a government should command anything which is contrary to God’s law, it would in that particular respect cease to be His minister, and lose its claim upon our obedience. (Acts 5:29) We must obey God rather than men. Thus the three men Spoken of in the book of Daniel refused to worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, and chose rather to be cast into the fiery furnace. (Dan. 3) Thus Daniel refused to stop praying to God at the command of the same king, and preferred to be cast into the den of lions. (Dan. 6) And Luther, at the diet of Worms, refused to obey the command of the emperor to recant what he had spoken and written, because he recognized that his duty to God and his own conscience was higher than his duty to earthly government.

Other Duties to the State

The State levies taxes for its support; and these the citizen is in duty bound to pay, without any attempt at evasion. We are to render tribute to whom tribute is due. (Rom. 13:7) We should love our country, and, as true patriots, seek its welfare in times of peace and help to defend it in times of war. We should pray for it and for all who are in authority over us. (1 Tim. 2:1,2) Such petitions for our President and for all who are in authority are found in the General Prayer contained in the Church Book and used at the morning service.

We should be anxious not only for the outward prosperity of our land, but pray and labor for the growth of respect for law and order, and for the increase of faith and righteousness among all classes, remembering that “righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Prov. 14:34) We should seek the highest good of our country in the development of right Christian character in the individuals who compose it. For the strength of a nation lies not in its armies and guns, but in the character of its people.

Church and State

In this country Church and State are completely separated. Neither has a right to interfere with the affairs of the other. The State deals with the temporal welfare, and the Church with the spiritual welfare of men. But we are not on this account to conclude that our American State is a neutral or godless institution. As a matter of fact, it is a Christian State, just as the Church is an American Church. Our government is Christian in its origin and fundamental principles. This is apparent from the Whole history of English common law, on which our American law is based. “There has never been a period in which the common law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundation. It pronounces illegal every contract offensive to its morals.”¹

A Christian State

Our government recognizes the existence of God, and requires that all public officers shall be bound by an oath before Almighty God to be faithful to their duties. Testimony in its courts is taken under oath. Its constitution and all legal documents are dated in the year of our Lord. The sanctity of the Lord's day is recognized, and contracts made on that day are not legally valid. It prohibits blasphemy by special laws and penalties. It forbids the disturbance of the public worship of God. The President appoints days of prayer, fasting and thanksgiving. "Christianity is part of the law of the land."² And while full legal rights are to be guaranteed to the non-Christian minority, we should remember that our land is a Christian land. A godless state cannot exist. The religious character of its people will necessarily be manifested in its laws.

Public Officers

The officers of the government are public servants, and should discharge their office as a sacred trust. (2 Sam. 23:3) And while the Church, as such, should not meddle in the affairs of the State nor enter into politics, her members, when they enter public life, are in duty bound to take their religion with them and make it felt as a power for good. In our civil and political life we should remember that we are Christians, and should always act with the fear of God before our eyes. Integrity, faithfulness, impartiality, and justice tempered with true Christian mercy should characterize the conduct of those who are placed in positions of authority. (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:18)

Every voter should remember his share of responsibility in securing righteous government, and cast his vote according to the dictates of his conscience. He should take his religion with him to the polls as well as into every other avenue of life; and he should use his suffrage for the furtherance of truth and righteousness.

Honoring Those in Authority

Those who have been elevated to positions of public trust by the free suffrages of the people should be honored by us for the sake of the office

which they hold, whether they belong to our political party or not. The President of these United States is our President and ruler, no matter by which party he was elected. Any belittling or abuse of the President or of others in authority, by means of speeches, conversation, cartoons or newspaper articles, cannot be too strongly condemned as an offense against the respect and honor which is due to our rulers, and which the Scriptures command us to give. It is right and necessary to point out errors and abuses in the government, but it should be done without animosity, bitterness or rancor.

Paul on one occasion spoke disrespectfully to the high-priest, not knowing that it was the high-priest. But when he learned who it was to whom he had thus spoken, he at once expressed regret for his words. For while that particular high-priest was personally unworthy of respect, the high office which he held forbade the use of disrespectful language; for it is written: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." (Acts 23:1-4) Disrespect for those in authority has a powerful tendency to breed disrespect for authority itself. It inclines to lawlessness and anarchy. We should "render to all their due: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." (Rom. 13:7)

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1. Mr. Justice Story↵
 2. Daniel Webster↵

52. The Christian's Life A Daily Repentance.

No matter how earnestly we may try to lead a Christian life, we shall fail of doing many things which we ought to do, and do many things which we ought not to do. (Rom. 7:18-25) We shall never be perfect or sinless in this world. (1 John 1:8) We shall daily need the forgiveness of God, and are taught by the saviour to pray for it daily. (Luke 11:3,4) We are constantly dependent on the grace of God. Our life should, therefore, be one of daily repentance.

Retaining God's Grace

Two temptations must be guarded against, if we would remain in a state of grace and retain God's favor. The first is self-righteousness, or the idea that we are good and holy, and do all that God has any right to expect of us. (Luke 18:9-14) The other is indifference to sin, or a lack of concern whether we live a holy life or not. (Rom. 6.) Either course is fatal to true religion. We should honestly and earnestly endeavor day by day to do God's will in all things. But when we have done so, We should realize that we are unprofitable servants who have done much wrong and omitted much good, and whose only hope of God's continued favor lies in His pardoning grace.

Self-Examination

We should try to be clear in our own mind what our duty is in every respect. This is to be learned from the teachings of God's Word and especially from the example of our Lord and Saviour. We should scrupulously compare our thoughts, words and actions with the requirements of duty. We should not

gloss over nor find excuses for our failings; but recognize them as sins, and repent.

Our Sins

If we are honest with ourselves in our self-examination, we shall find that we daily sin against God in thought, word and deed. The old nature within us prompts us to all manner of sin; and only too often we heed its promptings. Consequently we are often selfish, cold in our love to God, wanting in faith and trust, unthankful for His goodness, and lacking in prayerful devotion. We often yield to the temptations of Satan and the world, give way to our own desires instead of denying ourselves, are often proud and vain, impatient and complaining. We are often selfish in our dealings with other men, seek our own advantage at their cost, close our hearts to their needs, judge unkindly of them in our thoughts, impute evil motives to them, speak uncharitably of them, and grieve them by unkind words or actions. We are often inclined to be greedy or stingy or extravagant or idle, to do what is dishonest, to be insincere and untruthful, to harbor sinful desires and lusts, and to cherish envy, hatred, malice and revenge. We often neglect duties in the home, the Church and the State, fail to hallow the Lord's Day properly, neglect the study of God's Word, and have too little concern for our own spiritual welfare and for that of our fellow-men. We cannot discover all our sins. We commit many sins which we do not even think of or know. (Ps. 19:12)

Repentance

The sins of which we daily are guilty should fill our hearts with sincere sorrow, with a desire for God's forgiveness, and with a determination to overcome them more and more by the grace of God. If we thus daily repent, we should believe and be sure that we also are daily forgiven for Christ's sake.

Looking Forward

We should neither allow ourselves to be indifferent to our sins nor to be discouraged by them, but should resolve to do better each day than we did the day before.

We should always look forward to higher and better attainment in Christian character and life. (2 Pet. 3:17,18) We should say with Paul, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:12) Our aim should be to grow more and more like Jesus our Saviour. (Rom. 8:29) This means a constant struggle; but it is the only way in which we can be faithful to Him. Only if we do this, can we say at the end of our days, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. 4:7)

Our Progress

Some have more to contend with than others in their natural disposition and their surroundings. But all who earnestly endeavor with God’s help to make progress in Christian living will succeed in doing so. The progress of some will be more slow than that of others. The man whose boat is in the middle of the stream and exposed to the strongest current will, even with the same effort, make less headway by his rowing, than the man who is close to the shore where the current is weaker. In the same way, many Christians make slower progress than others in Christian life, because they have stronger forces of evil to contend against. The important question is, which way is our boat headed and how hard are we rowing. We should see to it that we never permit ourselves to drift with the current of sin, but constantly pull against it. Those who make no effort to stem the current, but permit themselves to drift with it, will drift to eternal destruction. A life of faith requires a constant and unremitting struggle against the forces of evil. We must be faithful unto death, if we would receive the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10)

Testing Our Progress

We may test our progress in holiness by inquiring of our own heart, whether the graces which are seen in the life of the Saviour are displaying themselves more and more in our life. (Phil. 2:5) Are hatred and envy giving way to love and good will within us, pride to humility, falsehood to truth, greediness and stinginess to benevolence and liberality, lust to purity, worldliness to spirituality? Are we controlling our temper and our tongue better each day, and becoming more unselfish, more willing to serve and be useful to others? Is the service of God daily becoming more delightful to us? Do we love Him more, trust Him more, and endeavor more anxiously to please Him?

Praying For Strength

It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13) Without His help, we cannot succeed in overcoming the forces of evil within and without. "Then we daily repent of our shortcomings and seek His forgiveness in prayer, we should also pray for grace and strength to overcome them. God will give strength to all who earnestly seek it of Him. (2 Cor. 12:9) We need the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide, encourage and strengthen us. And God will give Him in answer to our prayers. (Luke 11:13)

Perseverance

We should not grow weary in well-doing. (Gal. 6:9) While we hold fast by faith the assurance that God in mercy forgives us all our sins, we should never permit ourselves to think that it is not necessary to do all in our power to live righteously. We dare not live in sin. If we do, we forfeit the grace of God. We are received into His grace by true repentance; and we continue in that grace by a constant and daily repentance.

Questions For Each Chapter.

1.

Through what means alone do we learn to know God? Can we learn anything about Him from other sources? What are they? Why are not conscience and nature sufficient sources of knowledge? Is there one God or many? How many Persons are there in God? What is this unity of the three Persons called? Is one Person greater than the others? Can we understand how God can be three Persons and yet one God? What passages of Scripture teach us that God is a Trinity? What kind of Being is God? Why do we sometimes speak of Him as if He had a body? How would you describe God? What do we mean when we say He is Eternal? Unchangeable? Omnipresent? Omniscient? Omnipotent? How would you describe God in His relation to us? What do we mean when we say that He is Holy? Just? All-wise? Kind and Merciful? Faithful and True? By what one word is God described?

2.

How did the world come into being? Describe the manner in which God made the world. In how many days did God arrange and complete the world as it now is? What did He do on each day? What was His last and crowning work? Why was man the crowning work of God? What does God now do with the world which He has created? For whom does He care? For whom does He care particularly? How would you prove that He cares particularly for them? What do we mean when we say that God rules the world? Does nothing happen that He does not wish? Can anything happen without His permission? What does He do for the godly? Does He always permit the wicked to go on in their wicked ways unhindered? Give some instances in which He hindered their evil purposes? Mention an instance in which He overruled the evil plans of men so as to bring good out of evil?

3.

Why is man the highest and noblest of God's earthly creatures? Is this image of God in man a bodily one? Why not? Is the body to be despised? Why not? What part of man's being was made in God's image? In what did this image consist? What was man's original state? Describe how man fell from that state. What are the consequences of the Fall into sin? Were those consequences confined to Adam and Eve? What are the consequences of the Fall with respect to our body? With respect to our soul? What is all men's relation to God by nature? How only can man escape from the effects of the Fall? Will he overcome the natural inclination of the heart to evil in this world? When only will he be free from sin and from its desire?

4.

What must God's Justice demand on account of man's sinfulness? What is the Law for all creatures? What would obedience to this law have meant for man? How did God give men His law first? How did He give His law later on? Why was the second giving necessary? What is the substance of God's law? What does God threaten against transgressors? Has man kept God's law? How does He break God's law? What kind of actions only are pleasing to God? Does or can any man keep God's law perfectly? Who was the only sinless Man? Why does man deserve punishment? Will God inflict punishment? How does He often punish men in this world? Is all suffering endured by men to be regarded as a punishment? How will God punish the impenitent in the next world?

5.

What has the love of God done for man? Why could He not simply relax the law and forgive men without providing a way of salvation? How is God's love revealed to us in earthly matters? In what especially has He revealed His love? From what time has God loved man? How did God's love provide the way of salvation? How does the sending of His only Son prove the greatness of God's love? Whom does God's love include? What must men do with regard to God's love? How does God try to reach the impenitent? What becomes of those who despise God's love? Why?

6.

To whom did God give the promise of a coming Saviour? When was the promise first given? What promise did God give to Abraham? From what tribe of Israel was the Saviour to be descended? From what king of Israel was He to be descended? What threefold office would he exercise? What would He become for us? Mention some of the events in His life foretold in the Old Testament.

7.

Whom did God send into the world to be our Saviour? Was Jesus true man? How would you prove it? Was He true God? What did the voice from heaven say at His baptism and His transfiguration? Because he is both God and man what name is given to Him? Why did the Son of God need to become man in order to save us? Did Jesus lose His divine power when He became man? Did He use it constantly? What glimpses of His majesty did He give men? How did He live ordinarily? Why did He humble Himself thus? What are some of the names given to Jesus? What does Emmanuel mean? Jesus Christ? Messiah? Mediator? Advocate? Great High Priest?

8.

What effect did the miracles of Jesus produce on the people? By whose power did Jesus do them? What was His first miracle? How many did He perform? Mention some that are recorded? How do we know that they were real miracles? How would you define a miracle? Did Jesus break the laws of nature when He performed miracles? What did He do with the laws of nature? In what way can we ourselves modify the laws of nature? Why did Jesus perform miracles? Why are they not necessary now? What did the miracles show for men's comfort? What did they prove concerning Jesus? What effect did they produce on many?

9.

Where did Jesus teach the people? How many did He teach at a time? Why is He the Great Teacher? What did He teach? What did He teach concerning Himself? Concerning the Kingdom of God? Why did He use parables?

Mention some of the truths which He taught by parables. Why did He give His disciples moral precepts? What is to be their relation to God and their neighbor? What rule is the Christian to follow in dealing with his fellow — men? How is he always to treat them? If he has wronged anyone what should he do? If others wrong him? What is he to do concerning his own and other people's faults? How is he to keep his mind, heart and life? What does Christ command with reference to our speech? How are we to treat the needy? What should be the nature of our religious life?

10.

What kind of life did Jesus lead? Being the Son of God, from what was Jesus free? Was He tempted to sin? How did He deal with temptation? Did He have any sins at all? For whose sins did He die? How did Jesus conduct Himself toward God? Toward men? How did He show His love for men? Whom did His love include? How do we know that He loved even His enemies? What does His holy life prove? How are we to use His holy life? What is the chief significance of His holy life? What has He acquired for us by it? How does that righteousness become ours?

11.

Why did Jesus suffer and die? What must be done for sin before it can be forgiven? How did God try to educate the Israelites up to the necessity of such restitution for sin? What did Jesus suffer for us? What was the climax of His sufferings? What is to be said about the voluntary character of Christ's death? What was the purpose of His death? Is His death sufficient for all? Why? Can we grasp the greatness of His sufferings? How can we form some conception of them? What is the result of His atoning death? How does the atonement of Christ help us? Is it forced upon anyone against his will?

12.

Why could not Jesus remain in the grave? What had He foretold concerning His resurrection? Was it a real return from death to life? How do we know that it was a real return? How do we know that the resurrection is a fact and not a deception of the disciples? What is the strongest proof of the

resurrection? Mention some of the appearances of Jesus to His disciples. What was the effect of the resurrection on the disciples? What relation did it bear to their preaching? Why is the resurrection of the greatest importance? What does it prove concerning Christ's death? What does it mean for us with respect to our own death?

13.

What did Jesus do forty days after His resurrection? Why did He ascend into heaven? Was He exalted as man or as God? Why could He not be exalted as God? What does sitting at the right hand of God mean? As the Son of God how long has Christ sat at the right hand of God? How long has He sat there as man? Did Jesus cease to be man when He ascended into heaven? Who therefore rules over the universe in the person of the God-man? Sitting at the right hand of God, what does Jesus do for us? How does He intercede for us? What is His threefold kingdom? Who belong to His kingdom of power? Who to His kingdom of grace? Who to His kingdom of glory?

14.

Who is the third person of the Holy Trinity? How do you know that the Holy Spirit is true God? Is the Holy Spirit merely a power or energy which God supplies? How would you prove that He is a Person? Why is the work of the Holy Spirit necessary in us? What is the change which He produces in the heart called? Why is a new birth necessary for man? Who must produce this new life in us? What relation do those who are born again sustain toward God? Through what does the Holy Spirit produce the new birth? What are these means? What is the chief means? Why does the Word of God possess such wonderful power? Through what means does the Holy Spirit produce the new birth in infants? How is the new life in them nourished? Whom does the Holy Spirit use as instruments in doing His work?

15.

Who need to be converted? What is conversion? What is the difference between conversion and regeneration? What other word may be used to

mean the same thing as conversion? What is the difference between repentance and remorse? In order to convert men what does the Holy Spirit do first? What does He do through the Law? Through the Gospel? Have men power to obey the call of the Gospel? How do they get the power? If men do not resist His grace, to what does the Holy Spirit lead them first? Then to what? Can Christians always point to the exact time of their conversion? Is it necessary that they should? Who need no conversion? What is to be said of the apostles on this subject? What is the important question with reference to conversion? What happens to those who willfully resist the grace of the Holy Spirit? What is to be said of a death-bed repentance?

16.

To whom only is the promise of salvation given? In what way do men exercise faith in matters of this world? Is faith only a matter of the head? On what, however, must faith be based? How do men learn the facts of the Gospel? What else besides knowledge belongs to faith? What is the third and principal part of faith? By what must faith be preceded? Does faith give us certainty of salvation? Does the believer ever have doubts? Do they last? Does faith grow? What should we do that our faith may grow? What can you say about the permanence of faith? If faith is not nourished on the Word of God what becomes of it? How do many people make shipwreck of their faith?

17.

How are we saved? What is meant by being saved by grace and saved by faith? Prove that God intends us to be saved by faith? Is faith a merit on our part? What does it mean to be justified? Explain how our faith justifies us before God? In our justification what does God do for us? Why can we not be saved by our works? How does the coming of Christ show that works cannot save us? Have works anything at all to do with our justification? Why are we to do good works? How were men saved in Old Testament times? Name some persons spoken of in the Bible as saved by faith in Old Testament times.

18.

Dare the Christian lead a life of sin? Does he desire to do so? Why not? What does he now desire to do? What relation does His holy life bear to his faith? Why is a new life necessary? What does the Saviour say about its necessity? Is it easy to lead a holy life? Why not? Will the Christian ever become perfectly holy in this world? What must he pray for every day? What should be his aim and aspiration? When he fails to do right, how ought he to regard his failure? When will the believer reach perfection? What is he to do here, however? What are we to do that we may grow in holiness? What is to be our motive in leading a holy life? Is the law of Moses abrogated? Who only is freed from the alternative of fulfilling it or suffering its penalty? What becomes of those who make the grace of God an excuse for persisting in sin?

19.

Against what enemy must the Christian contend? Who is Satan? How is he described in the Bible? What are his names and what do they mean? Is Satan the only fallen angel? What do he and the other fallen angels form? What is to be said about their power? What is Satan's aim? What does he try to do with the unbelieving? What with the believers? Give some examples in which he tempted men? How does he come to us? What must we do when he tempts us? Can we win the victory over him? How can we do so?

20.

When was the Christian Church founded? What is the Church? Can we tell just who belongs to the Church and who does not? Why not? In what sense is the Church visible? Are all who belong outwardly to the Church real members of it? Distinguish between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. Is there one Church or many? On account of its being one, what is the Church called? What other names are given to the Church besides that of the Catholic or Universal Church? What is the relation between Christ and the Church? What is the relation of the members to one another? What work has Christ given His Church to do? What are the tools with which it is to do its work? Who are its workmen to handle its tools? Does the New Testament recognize difference of rank in the ministry? What are the duties of the ministry?

21.

What is the most important of the Church's tools for doing its work? Why is the Bible needed? What does the Bible contain? What is the Bible? How do we know that the Old Testament is the Word of God? What did the apostles say about their own writing and preaching? Why are there differences of style in the various books of the Bible? Of what is the Bible an infallibly correct record? How do you explain the contrast between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke on the one hand and of John on the other? What is the relation of the Bible to science? What is the best evidence of the inspiration of the Bible? Why was the Bible written? What is the nature of its authority?

22.

What is the command of Christ on which baptism is based? What is His promise? What is baptism? What does the Holy Spirit do through baptism in infants and adults? What privileges are opened to those who are baptized? Why is baptism necessary? Illustrate its necessity from the cure of Naaman the Syrian. In what two modes can baptism be administered? Is immersion essential? Why is pouring or sprinkling practiced by the majority of Christian churches? What does the word "baptize" mean? How did the apostles baptize? What is to be said of the mode in which Christ was baptized? Give some reasons why children are to be baptized? Why do they need baptism? What must those who are baptized do if they would be saved? Will baptism save those who do not believe? Why is baptism not to be administered to the same person more than once? If those who have fallen from their baptismal grace repent, how does God treat them? What is the object of confirmation? What makes people members of the Church? What does confirmation do? Show that confirmation is in harmony with the spirit of the Bible.

23.

What did Christ say when He instituted the Lord's Supper? What is given to the communicant in, with and under the bread and wine? How do we know this? Why are bread and wine used? Is it lawful to substitute any thing else in their place? What is given through the bread and wine? Are they mere symbols of spiritual things? Are they turned into the body and blood of Christ? What is this false doctrine called? Are the bread and wine combined with the body and blood into a third substance? What is this false doctrine called? What is the real office of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper? Can we understand how Christ can give us His body and blood 1' What is the object of the Lord's Supper? How is it to be received? What names are given to this sacrament, and why? What is the nature and object of the confessional service before communion?

24.

Who must die? Why must men die? Do we know how or when we shall die? How do many people shorten their lives? Why do the impenitent and unbelieving fear death? Why has not death the same terrors for the Christian? In what terms is the death of the believer spoken of? Why must believers die? What shall take place in the bodies of those who are alive at Christ's second coming? that will Christ do with all the dead at the last day? What kind of a body will the unbelievers have then? What kind will the believers have?

25.

For what purpose will Christ come to earth again? Do we know when He will come? Can the date of His coming be computed from any figures given in the Bible? Mention some of the signs of His coming? How will He come? How will His coming be regarded by the unbelieving? How by the believers? What will He do with all men when He comes? For what purpose shall they be gathered before Him? Why will the believers escape condemnation? Why will not the unbelievers escape? How will Christ separate men then, and what will He say to them? What shall happen to this world at Christ's coming?

26.

What two eternal destinies are there? On what does it depend which shall be ours? What share have men in shaping their eternal destiny? How do we know that hell is a reality? Describe its torments. What degrees of punishment are there? Will the punishment of the lost ever come to an end? What is the eternal destiny of believers? Are there degrees of glory in heaven? On what are differences in glory dependent? Will there be differences of happiness? Can we grasp or adequately describe the bliss of heaven? From what shall we be freed there? Where shall we dwell? What shall be our delight and employment there? How does St. John describe the heavenly city?

27.

Of what does the second half of Bible Teachings propose to treat? What is the great standard by which we should regulate our life? What is the wrong standard by which to regulate our life? Why will a Christian try to live according to the right standard? Where do we find that will revealed? What is the substance of the Moral Law? Is this law the same for believers and unbelievers? What is the difference between their relations to it? What is the relation of morality to religion? Is morality without religion acceptable to God? Is true religion possible without morality? What is to be our relation to gross sins? Is their avoidance all that is required of a good man? What else is necessary? Mention the various relations of life in which obedience to the law of love is to be observed. Is well-doing rewarded? Is it a reward of merit or of grace? Mention some special promises of reward.

28.

How should we love God? What is to be our relation to other objects? Why should we love God above all? How do we make idols of ourselves or earthly objects? What should produce love to God in us? What is the relation between a Christian and God? Why are the promises of salvation given to those who love God? What is the relation of faith and love to each other? How is our love to God manifested? What kind of fear are we to have for God? What has love to do with obedience? What renders obedience easy? If obedience to God is burdensome to us, where does the difficulty lie? What is the remedy? Where do we find a striking illustration

of what a Christian's love to God will enable him to do? Who is our example of perfect love to God?

29.

What is the natural inclination of the human heart toward God and toward men? Is humility necessary in the Christian? Show how Christ was humble. How did Christ show humility toward God? How did He show it toward man? Why should we be humble? What is humility? What is to be said of its importance? Why is it necessary? Explain the case of the apostle in this connection. What is the source of the Christian's strength? Whom does God make strong? How are we to manifest our humility toward others? In speech? In actions? What are some of the things of which people are often proud? Mention some signs of pride. Instead of seeking to be honored by others, what should we seek to do? Who is greatest in the kingdom of God? What special act of humility did Christ perform in order to give His disciples an example? Is humility inconsistent with courage and leadership? What examples prove that it is not?

30.

From whom do all the blessings we enjoy in body or soul come? How should we receive them? What are some of the earthly blessings God bestows? What are the spiritual blessings? When did Christ give thanks? What does this teach us? What is to be said of the meanness of ingratitude? Does God expect gratitude? How have the godly always regarded the goodness of God? What Book of the Old Testament is largely composed of expressions of thanksgiving? When are we to thank God? How about giving thanks when we are in trouble? What is to be said about the world's ingratitude? Who only is thankful, and why? Are believers always as thankful as they should be? What fact becomes an occasion of unthankfulness, though it ought to produce the very opposite effect? What should be the nature of our gratitude to God? How should we seek to increase our gratitude? How should our thankfulness be shown? Why is a thankful life necessary?

31.

What kind of a trust are we to have in God? What does such a trust include? Why should we trust in Him? What is to be said of our safety in danger? How long are we secure from death? When death comes, is it a real evil to the believer? Why should we not permit ourselves to worry? Does that mean that we are not to take forethought and be prudent? What must we do on our part? What will God do then? How should we regard our lot in life? How does God shape our life? How should we bear life's vexations, disappointments and sorrows? Why should we be courageous and hopeful?

32.

Why is prayer necessary? What is to be said about the prayerfulness of Christ? What is the model prayer? What does it teach us? How are we to approach God? What is to be our first concern? Our second? What manner of prayer is wrong? What is to be said of the use of prayers prepared by other people? How should the Lord's Prayer be used? What advantage may be derived from the use of the Psalms, prayer-books and the Church-book? What has our posture to do with our prayers? Why do we stand in Church on Sunday? What is to be said of those who sit still while others stand? When should we pray? What set times of prayer should we have? What is to be said of family worship? Of the prayers in Church? What kind of prayers will be answered? What does praying in Christ's name mean? Should we insist upon our own will in our prayers? Who alone knows what is best for us? Does God always hear and answer prayer? Does He always do so at once? Does He always send the answer which we expected? How does He sometimes send the answer? Which answer is best for us?

33.

Why must we defend ourselves against the enemies of our soul? Who are these enemies? What is at stake? What is the value of the soul? How do our enemies attack us? How only can we win? Which is our most dangerous foe? To what does the flesh tempt us? How does the world tempt us? Dare we love the world? How are we to overcome the world's temptations? Who is behind all the temptations of the flesh and the world? How does Satan attack us? Why are temptations permitted by God? Does God ever tempt us to evil? What does it mean when the Bible speaks of God as tempting Abraham and others? What does temptation show in reference to our love

to God? What does the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer mean? Who helps us in the conflict? Why does Christ sympathize so fully with us in our temptations?

34.

If we Wish to be Christ's disciples, what virtue must we exercise? What does self-denial mean? What must we do with all sinful inclinations and passions? How are we to treat our innocent desires and earthly affections? Quote what St. Paul says on the sacrifice of ourselves, that we may live with Christ. What is to be said about the deep significance of self-denial? What must we give up? When must we give up things that are innocent in themselves? Why should we deny ourselves for the sake of others? Why is self-denial necessary? What may be learned from the example of racers, boxers and the like? "That is to be said about self-indulgence? When are we to make sacrifices? What does Christ say of the one who places his earthly safety and comfort above self-denial? What is the surest way to be happy? What was the example of self-denial and sacrifice which Christ has given us? IVhat should encourage us to imitate His example?

35.

What is meant by self-control? Why is it necessary? What kind of a mind and temper are we to have? What kind of feelings should be suppressed as soon as they appear? When only is anger justified? How are we tempted to anger? Dare we give way to anger? Why not? that evil consequences result from giving way to it? What is to be said of the power of the tongue? How only should we use the tongue? What is to be said of cursing and swearing? In what commandment is it forbidden? What does God threaten against transgressors? What does God think of a lying tongue? In what commandment is false witness or slander forbidden? How are we to judge and speak of other people? If we cannot speak well of others, what had we better do? What has bridling our tongue to do with our religion? With our salvation? Who only can tame our tongue? In what respects are we to be temperate? Why? What is to be said of drunkenness? Can a drunkard inherit the kingdom of God? What is to be said of the slavery of drink? - How do the Scriptures warn us against intoxication? What should we do therefore?

What is to be said of intemperance in eating? What is to be said of the evils of sensuality? Why is intemperance of any kind a sin?

36.

What must the Christian suffer? Why? How should he bear his afflictions? For whom are afflictions punishments? What are they for the Christian? Are those who suffer most to be regarded as the most wicked? Why not? Why does God chasten us? Why is chastening necessary? Can we understand all God's dealings with us? In suffering, of what one thing may we always be sure? Mention some uses of affliction? Why does God permit burdens to remain on us? When only shall we perfectly understand God's dealings with us? Why should we be brave under pain and sorrow? How much should we be willing to undergo for Christ's sake? Why should we be cheerful under afflictions? How should we regard all our troubles? If we do not bear them willingly, are we bearing our cross? How only can they accomplish the purposes which God intends?

37.

How are we to regard and perform our daily work? Is man meant for work? What did God command Adam to do? Is labor a curse? What is a curse? Why is work necessary? Why is the work of each necessary? Is any honest work mean and degrading? What work is often the most useful? How should we choose our occupation in life? What should those do who find that their occupation is forbidden by their religion? How can we serve God best? How can we let our light shine and glorify God? Why should we be industrious? Why is idleness a curse? Should any be idle, even if rich? What is to be said about the diligent employment of time? Why should we do our work faithfully? Dare we be unfaithful in small things? How should employers treat their employees?

38.

To what kind of pleasure and enjoyment should we confine ourselves? How far should we indulge in them? When only should we engage in pleasure? What should be the greatest source of our joy? For what purpose should we seek enjoyment? When does playing games become wrong? What is to be

said of gambling, betting and lotteries? What is to be said of dancing? Can the modern style of dancing be justified from the Scriptures? What is to be said of the theater and opera-house? Of music? Of the other fine arts? Of the beauties of nature? Of conversation? What kind of conversation should we avoid? What is to be said of reading novels? What are some of its evil effects? How are we to be on our guard in reading literary and scientific writers, and in drawing instruction from secular teachers and textbooks.

39.

What is the ideal of character? What are some of its attributes? On what must character rest? How is our character formed? What is to be said about our habits? How only can correct habits be formed? What is a prime requisite for a Christian character? What is conscience? How is its voice smothered? Why and how should we keep from hardening our conscience? What can you say about the peril of small sins? Why do we need an enlightened conscience? How are we to seek to prevent sins of ignorance? In what sense may a Christian become perfect? What virtue must lie at the base of Christian character? In what way do our friends and companions affect our character? What influence has our reading on our character? What kind of books should we avoid? Can the soul-poison distilled into our minds and hearts by bad books and papers ever be wholly eradicated? What kind of books and papers only should we read? Why?

40.

Whom does the Christian religion require us to love? What is to be said of the brotherhood of man? 'Who is our neighbor? What is taught by the parable of the Good Samaritan? What is the kind of love which we should have for all men. What can you say of the importance of charity or Christian love? Mention some ways in which Christian charity is manifested? What is to be said of our love to our fellow-Christians? How should we regard and treat our enemies? What can you say about the necessity of forgiving other people? What is the relation between Christian love and politeness? What is to be said about being helpful to others? How should we show our love for the needy and suffering? What can you say about the importance of a good example? What is the Golden Rule?

41.

What is to be said about the importance of the family? What is to be said about the position of father and mother in the family? How do parents provide for our temporal wants? What is to be said of the training of children by the parents? Explain and illustrate the necessity of punishing children for wrong-doing. How should children regard and treat their parents? What can you say of the duty of honoring our parents? What can you say about loving our parents? What is to be said of the obedience which we owe to our parents? What can you say about serving our parents? How should we regard and treat our parents after we are grown? How should we regard and treat our grandparents and other old people? Describe the conduct which should characterize our life in the home.

42.

What is to be said of the importance of our obligation to the Church? Mention some examples of faithfulness to the Church. What is our duty with respect to God's word? How are we to regard and treat the sacraments? What is to be said of the importance of living a right life? What is to be our relation to other members of the Church? What should be our relation to the pastor? What is the work of deacons and deaconesses? What is our duty to those who are outside of the Church? What is to be said about the division of the Church into so many denominations? What is the object of creeds or confessions? Mention the creeds and confessions of the Lutheran Church. What is to be said about the confessions of our Church? Describe what should be our attitude toward our own Church? Why should we love and honor our own Lutheran Church? What should be our relation to other churches?

43.

Why is the observance of the Lord's Day important? Tell what you know of the Old Testament Sabbath. By whom and why was Sunday set apart as a holy day? What is to be said about the need of Sunday as a day of rest? What is to be said about Sunday work? What kind of work should be done on the Lord's Day? How should we keep the Lord's Day holy? How should we regard the services which are held in God's house? What is to be said of

the duty of attending church regularly? Describe proper behavior in the church. What are our duties with respect to the Sunday-school? Mention some ways in which the Lord's Day is profaned. Tell what you know of the Church-year.

44.

What is to be said about the Bible in comparison with other books? What can you say of the Word of God as the food for the soul? Why is the study of the Bible necessary? What can you say of the Saviour's study of the Scriptures? Show the importance of reading the Bible daily. What is to be said about system in reading the Bible? What should be our purpose in reading the Bible, and how can this purpose be accomplished? Show the importance of having a regular set time for reading the Bible. Why should the Scriptures be memorized? Mention some passages which should be memorized. How may the memorizing of Scripture be combined with its devotional use? How should we profit by the use of the Word of God in Church? What is to be said about the knowledge gained by teaching others? Describe the three plans for systematic study of the Bible given in our lesson. What is to be said about the formation of a Biblical library? What kind of editions of the Bible will prove most serviceable for study?

45.

What is to be said of the importance of truthfulness? Define a lie. How are liars regarded by God? Is a lie ever justifiable? Describe Christ as an example of truthfulness. What is to be said of the necessity of seeing right? What is meant by sincerity? What is to be said of the responsibility imposed by the power of speech? What weight will our words have on the Day of Judgment? What is meant by speaking the truth about things? In what spirit should we speak the truth? How should we act with regard to our convictions? What truth is it especially important to maintain? What example can you give of faithfulness to convictions? What is to be said about our promises? What is to be said about excuses? Why is it necessary to apologize for wrongs done to others? What should we do with regard to other people's secrets? What can you say about the importance of speaking the truth about persons? What is to be said about judging others? How

should we regard slander and slanderers? What is to be said about praising others?

46.

What constitutes property? How may it be acquired? What is to be said about its unequal division? What is to be said about the community of goods in the early Church? Why is not an equal division of property among all men practicable? What is God's purpose in the unequal division of property? What is to be said about the love of money? What is to be said about the relation between riches and godliness? What can you say about the uncertainty of riches? Describe the temptations and dangers of wealth. What responsibility do riches impose? Why can the poor be happy as well as the rich? What advantages have the poor? What had the poverty of Lazarus to do with his salvation and the wealth of the rich man with his condemnation? Which is the most desirable state, and why? How alone can we be truly happy? How should we treat the rich and the poor?

47.

What is to be said of avoiding dishonesty? What is to be said about the importance of honesty? Mention some gross forms of dishonesty. Mention some other forms. In what forms is dishonesty widely prevalent? What is to be said of the importance of subduing covetousness? How does God regard dishonesty of any kind? What is to be done by those who have been dishonest? What kind of honesty is required of us? What is the importance of honesty in little things? What is to be said about caring for the interests of other people?

48.

How are we to regard everything that we possess? that is to be said of money as a power? that is to be said of the use of money for our earthly needs? Why should we give to the Church? When and why should we give to our fellow-men? that is our duty to the poor? How may our aid be extended? How does God regard what we do for the poor? Why should we give to missions? that is the work of Home Missions and of Foreign Missions? why should we count it a privilege to give to missions? What is to

be said about proper methods of giving to the Church and the poor? What is to be said about liberality? How does God regard the gifts of the rich and the poor? What can you say about “the widow’s mite?” What should be our motive in giving? What is to be said about the use of all our powers of body and mind?

49.

What is to be said of the sacredness of human life? Why is it sacred? Mention some causes which lead to murder. Mention some other forms of killing besides outright murder. What is to be said of injuring or hurting others? What is to be said of killing others in self-defense? that is to be said of war? Of duels? What can you say of hurting or killing the soul? How and why should we guard and preserve human life? What is to be said of the wickedness of suicide? Mention some causes which lead to it. Describe the folly of suicide. What should we do to avoid being tempted to such a great crime? thy is suicide cowardly? How do people shorten their own life? What is to be said about giving our life for others?

50.

Why should we be pure? Why is purity of heart of great importance? What kind of conversation should we avoid? Why should we be chaste in deeds? To whom does our body belong? What exhortations does the apostle give concerning purity. Describe the curse of uncleanness. How should we guard against impurity? By whom was marriage instituted? Is celibacy a holier estate? Why did God institute marriage? Dare the marriage bond be broken? What is to be said about haste and thoughtlessness in being married? Why is it important for husband and wife to have one faith? Why is it important that they should possess the same grade of intelligence? Should people ever marry without love? What is to be said about the parents’ consent? Why is a religious ceremony important? What should be the relative position of husband and wife in the family? What things have they in common? For what cause only dare a divorce be granted? Who only of those divorced dare marry again?

51.

Whence does the government derive its authority? What is the object of government? What rights belong to us as individuals? What is to be said about obedience to the government? What about rebellion? What about lynching? What is to be done if the laws of the State conflict with the laws of God? Mention some other duties to the State besides obedience? What is the relation between Church and State in this country? Is our State a neutral or godless institution? How would you prove that our State is a Christian State? What is to be said about religion in public officers? How should each voter deal with his ballot? What is to be said about honoring those in authority? Describe the example of St. Paul.

52.

Why should our life be one of daily repentance? Against what two temptations must we guard in order to retain God's favor? What is to be said of the duty of self-examination? Mention some of the sins which self-examination will reveal? What should we do with regard to these sins? What should be our constant aim? What is to be said of making progress in holy living? How may we test our progress? Why should we pray for strength? What is to be said about persevering in well-doing?

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

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Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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