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Christ Is All

Sermon Notes and Bible Studies

Daniel C. Snaddon

Faithful Men

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“The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

Christ Is the Center and Circumference of the Scriptures

Broadly speaking there are five great divisions in the Scriptures. Christ in many facets of His glory—Each division portrayed. These divisions can be conveniently fixed in the memory by five key words.

Christ Himself is the one theme of the Scriptures.

He Himself attested this truth when He took the Scriptures: And beginning at Moses i.e. the Pentateuch—then going through the writings of the prophets—He expounded—explained—interpreted—unto them, in every part of the Scripture the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27.

On this hallowed occasion Cleopas and his companion had the inestimable privilege of hearing the Incarnate Word—Christ the Risen Lord—expound the Written Word—the Holy Scriptures.

As He expounded the Scriptures to them, He gave them the “great key” to the understanding of them. He Himself is the subject, and that in Him the entire canon of Scripture finds its oneness, harmony and unity. “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us along the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures.” “Lord our Teacher be” 348.

Here are the five key words.

The “Preparation” for Christ is in the Old Testament.

The “Manifestation” is in the Gospels.

The “Propagation” is in the Acts.

The “Explanation” is in the Epistles.

The “Consummation” is in the Revelation.

- In the Old Testament we see God “preparing” for the coming of Christ.
- In the Gospels He is “manifested” to the world.
- In the Acts, through the Gospel, He is “propagated” in the world.
- In the Epistles His Gospel is “explained.”
- In the Revelation all the purposes of God in Christ are “consummated.”

The Scriptures are the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. As to His Person, as God manifest in flesh.
2. His sacrificial death.
3. His resurrection.

These truths constitute the Gospel. To this point all preceding Scriptures lead. From this point all following Scriptures proceed.

In the fullness of this divine revelation we see Christ as: Son of God—Son of man—Son of Abraham—Son of David. He is Israel’s king—the desire of all nations.

He is also the seed of the woman. Gen 3:5. As such, He is the ultimate destroyer of Satan and his works.

As the seed of Abraham He is the benefactor of the world. In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

As the seed of David He is Israel’s king.

At present the Scriptures reveal Him as “Exalted to the right hand of God.” In Ephesians 1 Paul describes for us the greatest display of God’s power as seen in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. It would seem from verse 21 that the hosts of hell were massed to frustrate God’s purposes by keeping Christ in the grave, and to prevent His ascension. God triumphed over every opposition.

Christ was raised by God from the grave of mortality to the throne of eternal God.

From the darkness of the tomb to insufferable and unbearable light.

From this small world to the metropolis of the Universe.

He is exalted above every principality—power—might—dominion—and every name that is named. “He is God over all blessed forever.”

Paul continues with an incredible truth. This blessed One with the nail scarred hands—the marks of the thorns on His brow—the spear wound in His side—God has given Him to the Church to be its glorious Head. Meanwhile the Church looks momentarily for the fulfillment of His special promise. “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.”

Describe the Rapture. 1 Thess 4 and 1 Cor 15.

In Gen 3:18, we see the curse pronounced upon sin, of which the thorns were the emblem. This very emblem the Savior bore upon His brow when He was made a curse for us.

In the Old Testament we see God preparing for the coming of His Son. Coats of skin provided for Adam and Eve. Animals

were slain—their blood shed to provide a covering, so that they were fit for God’s presence.

The blood of Christ, the Anti-type, provides us with the garment of righteousness, making us fit for God’s presence.

Abel’s lamb points forward to the Lamb of God.	For the individual.
Passover Lamb speaks of redemption in Christ.	For the nation.
Behold the Lamb of God, etc. Blood.	For the world.

The Bible almost always speaks of blood as being shed—Blood is the life—blood-shed is death. The death of Christ is our sacrifice. We are made righteous by God.

The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head, and in doing so His heel would be bruised.

Hebrews 2. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Jesus was the seed of the woman. This is a remarkable statement. In the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, the term used throughout is “begot.” But when we come to verse 16 we read: “And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ.”

The change of expression is significant. Mary, of whom was born Jesus. Jesus is the seed of the woman. “A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a place of safety from the tempest. Isa 32:2. The Ark is a type of Christ. The Ark was

God's plan. It was a place of safety—It bore the storm of judgment—It had to be entered by the door. Pitched within and without. Eternally secure in Christ. John 10.

Jacob's ladder—bridging the gulf between earth and heaven. This is a picture of the Cross of Christ, which has forever bridged the gulf for us.

The Manna is a type of Christ the Living Bread. The smitten rock is a type of Christ from Whom came the Living Water. = The Holy Spirit. "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out" Psalm 105:41.

The offerings—Burnt—Sin—Trespass—Meal—Peace.

Adam=Headship—Abel=His death—Noah=His work—
Melchizedek=Priest—Moses=Prophet.

The types—Isaac—Joseph.

The Tabernacle speaks of Christ.

In Leviticus we see the importance of the blood.

- Redemption through the blood. - 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- Forgiveness through the blood. - Eph 1:7.
- Justification through the blood. - Rom 5:9.
- Peace through the blood. - Col 1:20.
- Cleansing through the blood. - 1 John 1:7.
- Sanctification through the blood. - Heb 13:12.
- Access through the blood. - Heb 10:19.
- Victory through the blood. - Rev 12:11.

Isaiah—prophecies about Christ's birth.

Description of Jehovah's perfect Servant. —Jehovah's suffering Servant.

Manifestation in the Gospels. God manifest in the flesh.
Matthew the King—Mark the Servant—Luke the Son of Man—
John the Son of God.

Ezekiel's vision. Ch 1:10. The likeness of their faces was as:

- the face of a lion. - Matt-King.
- the face of an ox. - Mark-Servant.
- the face of a man. - Luke-Son of man.
- the face of an eagle. - John-Son of God.

In Matthew the King is worshiped. "The wise men." In Mark the Servant is obedient—and immediately. In Luke the Son of man—the incarnation—His life as a man. In John the Son of God—the I Am's

I Am the Bread of life, Light of the world, the door, the good Shepherd, the resurrection and Life, the Way-Truth-and Life, the true vine.

When the Lord used the word "I AM" in the garden they all fell backward. Before Abraham was I AM. John 8:58. There are seven miracles in John, each one proving the Deity of the Lord.

Propagated in the Acts. The disciples were witnesses to His resurrection. They preached this at all times. They spread the glory of His name abroad, beginning at Jerusalem—Judea—Samaria—the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts is the account of the greatest missionary endeavors ever undertaken.

Explanation in the Epistles.

- Romans is the Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ.
- Galatians we see the Cross of Christ.
- Ephesians we see the Heavens in Christ.
- Philippians we see the Joy in Christ.
- Colossians we see the Christ as our Head.
- 1-2 Thessalonians we see the Christ our Hope.
- Titus we see the Christ our Savior.
- Hebrews we see the Christ our High Priest.
- 1-2-3 John we see the Fellowship with Christ.

Revelation the Consummation. We see Him in this book as Christ the Lamb. The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land.

- Salvation through the Lamb. - Rev 7:14.
- The new song of eternity, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." - Rev 5:12-13.
- The worship of the Lamb. - Rev 5:8.
- The victory of the Lamb over all His enemies. - "These shall make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." - Rev 17:14.
- The coming again of the Lamb.
- "Behold I come quickly" Amen. "Even so come Lord Jesus." - Rev 22:20.

The Person of Christ

John 1:1-18

The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a divine mystery, beyond the comprehension of the human mind.

Matt. 11:27 says, “No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” We must not attempt to analyze or speculate. We must not approach the Person of Christ like chemists with our test tubes and reactors analyzing all the mysteries of Christ. Neither must we approach our blessed Savior like physiologists with our instruments dissecting His personality.

Let us read the Word under the influence of the Holy Spirit and approach Him as disciples and worshippers.

The Scriptures speak of Christ in three ways.

1. His deity
2. His perfect sinless humanity
3. The union of these two perfect natures at His incarnation.
This has been called the hypostatic union.

His Deity

There are scores of passages in the Bible which declare the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. John 10:38; 14:9-10. “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” He Himself claimed to be God. He said, “I and My Father are One.” “Making Himself equal with God.” He claimed complete equality with God. John 5:18, 23. He claimed

to be the Life-giver—the Resurrection—John 11—the Judge of all men—John 5. He claimed to forgive sins. Luke 4.

The Jews clearly understood these claims, and attempted to kill Him for alleged blasphemy.

Three of the attributes of Deity are: Omnipotence—Omniscience—Omnipresence. The Gospels record 35 miracles which Christ performed, which proved His:

Omnipotence ‘*All powerful*’ These were performed principally in four spheres.

1. *Bodily healing* Leprosy—centurion’s servant.
2. *Forces of nature* Walking on water—stilling the storm.
3. *Demon possession* Man of Gadara.
4. *Death* Lazarus—Power over Disease-Demons-Death.

From John we learn that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. John 20:30.

Omniscience ‘*All Knowing*’ As a child of 12 years He astounded the teachers of His day with His wisdom. He knew of His Cross-work “Mine hour is not yet come.” Several times He mentioned his death “Mine hour is come.”

In John 2 it is stated that “He knew all men” and again “He knew what was in man.” “He needed no one to testify of man” etc.

John 16:30 His disciples bore witness. “Now we know that thou knowest all things.” “Thou knowest all things” etc. Peter. In keeping with His omniscience, He is declared to have the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:30. In Him was the fullness of

the Godhead. Such phenomenal qualities could not be ascribed to even the wisest of prophets. They constitute another proof that He possesses all the divine attributes of Deity.

Omnipresence 'Everpresent' The fact that the Lord in His infinity is present everywhere in the total of His deity is clearly stated in many Scriptures. See Psalm 139: 7-10 Whither? From Thy Spirit—Presence—Heaven—hell—uttermost parts—darkness.

The omnipresence of God is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:20 "And lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Prison Camp. To every servant of His. "I will not leave you comfortless" Then He promised to indwell every believer. John 14:18, 20, 23. This would be impossible if He were not omnipresent. Peter "Thou art the Christ." Thomas—demons. Martha "Thou art the Christ."

This truth is also confirmed by His experience with Nathaniel. John 1:47 "Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile." Nathaniel said, "How do you know me?" Jesus said, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Matthew 18:20 "Where two or three...there am I in the midst." Transfiguration: The God of the dead and the living.

Hebrews 10:12; Malachi 3:6. Let us now consider His immutability. Christ is immutable in that He never changes as stated in the classic passage of Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same" etc. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Then there is the eternity of the Son of God. The doctrine of the eternity of the Son of God is the most important doctrine of Christology, because if Christ is not eternal then He is a

creature who came into existence in time, and lacks the quality of eternity and infinity which characterizes God Himself.

Those who accept the Scriptural testimony as inerrant find ample proof to support the conclusion that Christ is not only eternal but that He possesses all the attributes of God.

His appearances in the O.T. referred to as theophanies also provide historical evidence of His existence before Bethlehem. Abraham—Hagar—Jacob—Moses—Gideon.

The prophets spoke of the Child who would be born in Bethlehem, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2.

Isaiah 9:6 The Lord is declared to be not only the “mighty God” but the “everlasting Father” which means “Father of eternity.”

This doctrine is also substantiated in the N.T.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word” etc. John 8:58 “Before Abraham was, I Am.” The God of a dateless past—changeless present—endless future.

The pre-existence of Christ is also taught in the N.T. John 3:17 “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world.” This implies that the Son of God existed before the incarnation. John 6:38 Jesus said, “For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” John 17:5, 24 Christ speaks of His preincarnate glories.

The Humanity of Christ

If the deity of Christ is a divine mystery the humanity of Christ is equally so.

1 Timothy 3:16 “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in flesh.” Babe of Bethlehem—Ancient of days—Father of eternity.

The Scriptures speak of His body Matthew 26:12 “She has poured this ointment on My body.”

His soul Mark 14:34 “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful.”

His spirit John 13:21 “When Jesus had thus spoken He was troubled in spirit.”

In His body of flesh He suffered pain (Cross)—fatigue (no where to lay his head).

He also felt the pangs of hunger (Wilderness)—thirst (Jacob’s Well)—He wept (O Jerusalem)—had compassion (sheep without a shepherd)—agonized (Gethsemane).

As a perfect Man He was never sick. He was not Joseph’s son. As God He healed the sick. Power over Disease—demons—death. He was not mortal man in that He was subject to death, but He submitted to death on our account. John 10:17 “I lay down my life, that I may take it again.”

Philippians 2:7 says “He emptied Himself.” “Made Himself of no reputation.”

What did that involve?

When He became man did He cease to be God?

In His humility He did not lay aside His divine attributes, this is clearly seen in the Gospels.

In incarnation He never acted independently, but always in complete harmony with His father and the Holy Spirit. John

14:10; Matthew 12:28. Every activity of the Godhead is always the Holy Trinity acting in unison.

It is the Father Who purposes.

It is the Son Who carries out these purposes.

In the energy of the Holy Spirit. He never ceased to be God.

One expositor defines the emptying as “He stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty.” “Divested Himself of His visible glory.”

His Godhead glory was veiled or covered by a veil of flesh.

John 1:14 uses the illustration of the Tabernacle in the wilderness in saying literally, “He pitched His tent among us.”

Outside were the badger skins—inside, the pure gold.

John says, “We behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Transfiguration

The emptying consisted of an addition, rather than a subtraction.

He took the servants form while still retaining all the attributes of deity.

The Union of the Divine and Human Natures

The Scriptures present Christ in incarnation as possessing two perfect natures—the human and divine.

Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.” This indicates His humanity and deity.

This is further illustrated

1. Mark 4:38 He is tired and sleeping in the stern of the boat. In Verse 39 He rises from sleep—rebukes the wind and the sea and commands the storm. A great calm.

2. John 11:35 we read that “Jesus wept.” In Verse 43 as the Resurrection and the Life He commands the dead man, “Lazarus come forth.” Matthew 1: 21, 23 Jesus—Emmanuel.

These two perfect natures must never be separated. He is and ever shall be the God-man. While our Lord had two natures, He is never considered a dual personality. The normal pronouns, such as *I, Thou, He* are used frequently.

From the Scriptures I gather that the incarnation was not a temporary arrangement which ended with His death and resurrection.

His human nature continues forever. His earthly body also has been transformed and suited for heaven.

The continuance of His humanity is reflected in such passages as Matthew 26:64 where it is stated that Christ will sit on the throne of His glory, and return to earth as the Son of Man.

“Henceforth you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

That Christ will continue in this body throughout eternity is demonstrated in four ways:

1. First, *in the resurrection*. His body was raised and prepared for heaven.
2. Secondly, He was received bodily into heaven.
3. Thirdly, He will return bodily to earth.
4. Fourthly, His body is the pattern of the body of believers who are raised or translated.

“This same Jesus will so come in like manner as you have

seen Him go.”

“The heavens shall glow in splendor,
But brighter far than they
The saints shall shine in glory,
As Christ shall them array;
The beauty of the Savior
Shall dazzle every eye
In the crowing day that’s coming By and by.”

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible the only
wise God” etc.

Study on John 14:6

“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

The Gospel of John is built around two groups of miracles.

One, in the realm of Words.

The other, in the realm of Works.

John's Gospel was not written to give a chronological exposition of the life of Jesus Christ, as the Synoptics do.

John's purpose in writing was to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

Chapter 19:31 “But these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name.”

To fulfill this purpose John chose seven miracles in the realm of Word and seven in the realm of Works.

The miracles in the realm of Works are as follows.

- (1) The changing of water into wine. Chapter 2:1-12
- (2) The healing of the nobleman's son. Chapter 4:46-56
- (3) The healing of the impotent man. Chapter 5: 1-16
- (4) The five thousand fed. Chapter 6:1-14
- (5) Jesus walks on the water. Chapter 6:15-21
- (6) Jesus heals the man born blind. Chapter 9
- (7) Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Chapter 11

The miracles in the realm of Words.

- (1) I am the Bread of Life. Chapter 6
- (2) I am the Light of the world. Chapter 9
- (3) I am the Door. Chapter 10
- (4) I am the Good Shepherd. Chapter 10
- (5) I am the resurrection and the life. Chapter 11
- (6) I am the Way. Chapter 14
- (7) I am the True Vine. Chapter 15

Calvary was less than a week away.

The Lord was seeking to prepare the disciples for His departure from this scene.

An event and crisis for which they were totally unprepared.

The question that Thomas asked in verse 5, “Lord, we do not know where Thou goest; so how can we know the way? “, was really Peter’s question of Chapter 13:36, “Lord where goest Thou?”

Ignorance or unbelief had prompted these questions.

The Lord had told them on at least three occasions of His impending death—burial—and resurrection. Stress this great truth. The Gospel.

There are many perplexing questions which occupy the mind of man.

Among the greatest of these is the question of the right approach or way to God. The Lord mentions two ways—The broad and narrow way.

The shroud of confusion envelops many today in a mantle of darkness as they consider the devious ways that man’s

unbridled imagination has developed. Mention a few at this point. Cain. No sense of sin. No need of atonement. Mainline religion—Cults—Agnosticism—Infant baptism.

Despite what the ingenuity of man has developed, and despite the slavish enthusiasm by which false propaganda is distributed, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, and heaven.

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

“There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.”

“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved.”

In spite of this clear teaching many are still confused.

The first convert at Bethany—Betty Bius—The young man who looked in.

On what are you depending for your salvation. “What can wash away my sin.”

On whom are you trusting for your eternal destiny. “There’s only hope in trusting Jesus.”

Professing to be and acting like a Christian will not save you—Simon.

Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God. Not even some who will say—Lord, Lord,

we have prophesied in Thy name, we have cast out demons, and we have done many wonderful works.

Then I will say to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.” “Who then can be saved?”

Those who are in the kingdom are those who do the will of My Father in heaven.

It is the will of God that you should not perish, but that you should come to repentance.

It is God’s will that you should believe and “receive Christ” as your Savior.

In return for your faith—God will give you eternal life—an incorruptible inheritance, that fadeth not away. “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve” etc.

“Jesus is standing in Pilate’s hall” etc.

“What shall I then do with Jesus who is called the Christ.”

“Oh what shall the answers be.”

“What will you do with Jesus—Oh what will the answers be.”

“I’ll just take Him home with me” etc.

The only hope of Christianity is in the rehabilitating of Paul’s theology.

It is back, back, back to the incarnate Christ, the atoning blood, the glorious resurrection, or it is on, on, on to atheism and despair.

The word “believe” occurs in John’s Gospel, in its various forms 98 times.

The word “life” occurs 55 times.

John wrote—"These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name."

The fact is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

To be saved we must believe this fundamental truth, and in believing we will receive eternal life.

John declares in Chapter 1 verse 4

"In Christ was life, and the life was the light of men."

John establishes at the beginning of his Gospel that eternal life is in the Son of God.

In Chapter 3:14-16 he says

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John teaches us here that eternal life is imparted to us through faith in the atoning work of the Son of God and that it is everlasting.

John continues in Chapter 5 and verse 24

"Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life."

John declares at this point the glorious truth, that possession of eternal life through faith in the Son of God gives exemption from judgment. There has been a passing over from death in sin unto life in Christ.

Describe the penal judgment from which we have been delivered.

John reminds us in Chapter 17:24 that the climax is reached when the Lord prays, "Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

So then the eternal life which the believer possesses through the Son of God is to be consummated in a heavenly glorification.

Who can measure what is involved in such immensities?

Yet how simple is the way into this eternal life.

"Oh how unlike the complex works of man

Heavens easy, artless unencumbered plan!

No meretricious graces to beguile

No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;

From ostentation as from weakness free,

Majestic in its simplicity.

Inscribed above the portal, from afar

Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,

Legible only by the light they give,

Stand the soul-quickenings words

Believe and live."

Coats of Skin (Genesis 3:21)

“And God made coats of skins, and clothed them.”

This verse gives us a typical picture of a sinner’s salvation.

1. It was the first Gospel sermon, preached by God Himself, not in words but in symbol and action.
2. It was a setting forth of the way by which a sinful creature could return to God.
3. It was the initial declaration of the fundamental fact that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.
4. It was the blessed illustration of “substitution”—the innocent dying in place of the guilty.

Notice that it was God who furnished the skins—made the coats—and clothed Adam and Eve. They did nothing.

This great truth is illustrated in the prodigal son. The father said “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” The prodigal did nothing—all was done for him. “For by grace you are saved, through faith and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God.”

“Behold the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world.” Think of what was involved in this statement. Down through the centuries Israel had known of the sacrificed lamb.

They knew of Abel’s lamb—and of Abraham’s lamb—the Passover lamb. They knew also of the lamb placed every morning and evening on the alter in the temple service. Isaiah had prophesied of One who would be led as a lamb to the slaughter. At last He had come, of whom the prophets had spoken, and John exclaimed “Behold the Lamb of God” etc.

Note that he came to take away the SIN of the world—not just the sins.

Size of the Ark—490 ft. long—80 ft. wide—50 ft. high.

1. The Ark was a Divine provision. Gen 6:13-14.
2. The Ark was a refuge from Divine judgment. It was a place of safety. It was the only place of deliverance from the wrath to come.
3. Into the Ark man was invited to come. “Come thou and all thy house into the Ark.” Gen 7:1.
4. The Ark was a place of absolute security. It was pitched within and without, with pitch. Double security. Noah was shut in by God. Gen 7:16.
5. There was only one door into the Ark.

There is only one way of escape from eternal death. There is only one way of deliverance from the wrath to come. There is only one Savior from the Lake of fire. “I am the Way” etc. “I am the door.” The door was in the side of the Ark—this pointed forward to the piercing of the Lord’s side.

Jacob—God’ promises to him. Gen 28:15. Despite his helplessness and unworthiness God said to him, I am with thee—I will keep thee—I will bring thee—I will not leave thee.

The Meal Offering

Leviticus 2 : 1-11

The Meal Offering presents in an unparalleled way the peerless character of the Man, Christ Jesus. It sets Him forth as “God manifest in the flesh,” the Incomparable Christ and the Impeccable Savior. The Meal Offering embodies an excellent portrait of Christ as He lived and walked before God and man. It unveils Him in all His Excellency as the pure, perfect, holy, and sinless One; the only One on earth who fully satisfied God’s heart.

Millenniums later, Paul described the One of whom the Meal Offering speaks as “the fullness of the Godhead” (Col. 2:9). The Father and the Spirit were in the Son in full measure (Jn. 17:21-23; 3:34). In His humanity He was the “visible expression of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). He was “God over all blessed forever” (Rom. 9:5). The New Testament writers go to great lengths to present him as the preeminent, paramount, and peerless One. The One who, though in a body of flesh, was perfect man and yet perfect God.

In such an “all-sufficient” Savior, every longing of the believer’s heart is fully met. The hymn writer expressed it so beautifully when he wrote:

“Savior, Thou art enough,

The mind and heart to fill,
Thy life, to calm the anxious soul,
Thy love its fear dispel.”

In our sorrow and distress we need sincere sympathy. It can be found in the sympathizing Jesus, He who mingled His tears with those of sorrowing sisters of Bethany (Jn. 11:35). In the midst of uncertainty and disappointment, we long for wholehearted, unfeigned love. This kind of love can be found in the heart of Him Who told forth His love in drops of blood. One has said, "I asked Jesus, 'How much do you love me?' He answered, 'This much.' And He stretched out His arms...and died."

Love that no tongue can teach

Love that no thought can reach

No love like His.

God is its blessed source

Death ne'er can stop its course

Nothing can stay its force

Matchless it is.

To every child of God, no matter the need, there are untapped resources in the person of our loving Savior.

There are many today who need protection from the world, the flesh, and the devil. They need a sanctuary from the stresses and cares of life. To obtain that peace that passes all understanding, we have but to flee to the lover of our soul, the One who made and holds the universe together. He has promised to be our shield—buckler—fortress—and high tower.

Do we need unerring wisdom in these days of complexity—days in which arise circumstances difficult to handle? Paul reminds us that "Christ hath been made unto us wisdom—

righteousness—sanctification—and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). All our need, no matter what it is, can be met in our precious Savior.

When John wrote Rev. 1, he gave us an unsurpassed disclosure of Jesus Christ. He describes Him as the “faithful witness,” thus presenting the Lord as the Prophet. He next makes Him known as the “first begotten from the dead,” revealing Him as Priest. Finally, he announces Him as the “ruler of the kings of the earth,” bringing to our attention that He is King—King of kings and Lord of lords. So then, as Prophet, Priest, and King, He is able to meet the deepest longing in our breasts, and fill our beings with a “peace that passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7).

In Christ were exquisitely blended a majesty which overawed, and a gentleness which gave perfect serenity in His presence.

As to His majesty, watch Him as He purifies the Temple. He made a whip of small cords and drove out the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves. He also drove out the moneychangers and overturned their tables, scattering their money. Despite the fact that these were rough men with many servants, and the proximity of temple guards, no one dared to challenge Him—they were overawed by His majesty.

His gentleness and sympathy are displayed at the grave of Lazarus. Even though He was about to demonstrate His deity in raising Lazarus, John records that “Jesus wept.” His gentleness is also seen in the incident when the disciples would have driven the children away but Jesus said, “Allow them to come to Me, for such is the kingdom of heaven.” The sisters of Bethany and the little children knew the gentleness of the Son of God. In Him was the perfect blend of sublime

Deity and the gentleness of perfect humanity. A true picture of the fine flour.

There was nothing unequal or uneven about the Lord. Think of the sorrow, suffering, and agony of Gethsemane—His strong crying and tears. Then consider the traitor’s band as they fell backward before the grandeur of His inherent majesty, “I AM.” Before God, His attitude was utter prostration. “Not My will, but Thine be done.” But before His accusers it was unbending dignity. Every quality was in perfect proportion. Truly He is the “fine flour.”

To understand the profundity and the simplicity of the teaching of the Meal Offering regarding Christ, we must consider three things:

1. The ingredients of which it was composed:

fine flour, oil, frankincense, salt

2. The forms in which it was presented:

baked in a pan; baked in an oven

3. The persons who partook of it:

Aaron and his sons

In considering the ingredients of which the Offering was composed, we are told “when any will offer a meal offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour” (v. 1). The fine flour speaks of the evenness and balance of the Lord’s character. There was nothing unequal—uneven—or rough about Him. He “was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). Every attribute that He possessed was in perfect proportion. Grace and truth were perfectly balanced in Him.

The fine flour is also the emblem of the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus. He was perfect in His speech: "Never a man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). He was perfect in His actions, "He does all things well" (Mk. 7:37). The centurion at the cross said, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Mk. 15:39). If there had been any flaw or unevenness or roughness about Him, His adversary Satan, would have exposed it. But in His perfect and impeccable character, He said, "The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in Me" (Jn. 14:30).

Every perfection met in Him. As His Father watched Him from the courts of absolute holiness, during the silent years and in His public ministry, He opened the heavens and, on at least three occasions, said, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:21-22; 9:35; Jn. 12:27-28).

Our Lord, depicted as the "fine flour," never had to recall a word nor retrace a step. He said, "I always do those things which please the Father" (Jn. 8:29). Near the end of His life He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4).

Note the perfect balance of His character in the following incidents. To His parents, he said, "Do ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Then afterward, "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Lk. 2:49-51).

Later, under extreme pressure in Gethsemane's garden, He prayed, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me" but quickly added, "nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done" (Lk. 22:42). It was the recognition of these unique qualities which brought forth the Father's commendation.

Next, let us consider the oil. The oil in the Meal Offering is a type of the Holy Spirit. The oil is used in a two-fold way: (1) it is “mingled” with the flour (v. 5), and (2) it is “poured” upon it (v. 1). In the antitype, we see first of all the Lord Jesus “conceived” by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18-23). The Lord’s conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin is one of the most profound mysteries that can engage the regenerated mind. “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, therefore, that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35).

We learn from this magnificent passage that the human body into which the Eternal Son entered, was formed by the “power of the Highest.” “A body hast Thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5). The Lord Jesus, the Eternal Son, entered a body which was prepared for Him by God, which was absolutely free from the principle of sin and mortality. This would be the teaching of the oil being mingled with the flour.

The oil was not only to be “mingled” with the flour but it had to be “poured” upon it (v. 1). In this action we have a type of the anointing of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s body was not only mysteriously formed by the Holy Spirit, it was also “anointed” for service by the same Person (Lk. 4:18). This “anointing” of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit prior to His entrance into His public ministry, is of immense practical importance to every believer who wants to be a true and effective servant of God.

Although the Lord was conceived in absolute purity by the Holy Spirit, and even though He was “God manifest in flesh,” when He came forth publicly to do the will of God in preaching the Gospel, teaching in the synagogues, healing the sick,

cleansing lepers, casting out demons, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead, He did it all by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord was formed, anointed, filled, and led by the Holy Spirit every moment of His life.

This is a deep and important lesson for us. How prone we are to run unsent and act in the energy of the flesh. O that Christ, the anointed One, would become our example. Even though He possessed divine power in Himself, He did all His work, wrought all His miracles, and finally offered Himself to God without spot, by the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14).

The third ingredient in the Meal Offering is frankincense (v. 1). There is a beautiful connection between the oil and the frankincense. The oil teaches us that the Lord did everything by the spirit of God. The frankincense teaches us that the Lord did everything for the glory of God. The frankincense also speaks of the fragrance of the Lord's life; this fragrance was exclusively for God. When heat was applied to the frankincense it emitted a unique fragrance. It was white in color, thus conveying the thought of purity. The life of the Lord was all for God. His every thought, word, and deed sent heavenward a fragrance which, in a unique way, satisfied God the Father. As a self-emptied, perfect, obedient Man on earth, the aroma of the intrinsic excellence of His life gratified the heart of God.

The fourth ingredient which composed the Meal Offering was salt (Lev. 2:13). Salt was a necessary ingredient, always present in the Meal Offering. Salt is that which preserves, and this speaks of the unique quality of the Lord Jesus. In the old economy, salt was used to ratify covenants (Num. 18:19). Our blessed Lord Jesus is not only the Mediator of a better

covenant, He is also the Preserver of that covenant (Heb. 8:6). Under this covenant the believer receives the promise of an eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

The bodily presence of the Man Christ Jesus before God, assures us of eternal salvation and security. His presence before God guarantees us the fulfillment of every promise. Salt also speaks of incorruption and perpetuity. Death and corruption are the results of sin. In Christ there is no corruption, neither in His life nor in His death. God did not permit His Holy One to see corruption (Ps. 16:10). The Lord's body never deteriorated one iota while in the grave. When he arose on the third day, His body was as fresh as when it had been laid in the tomb. After showing himself to His own for forty days, He ascended into heaven in his specially prepared, incorruptible body.

In later years, John saw Him as a Lamb newly slain (Rev. 5:6). Today, millenniums later, the Lord in His incorruptible body is still in the midst of the throne. His perpetual presence before God in His divine character as salt, preserves all the great and exceedingly precious promises.

At this point, please note the absence of "leaven" and "honey". "No meal offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven" (v. 11). Leaven in the Scripture is a symbol of evil (1 Cor. 5:8). In this offering there was to be nothing expressive of evil, nothing that would eulogize the flesh. As this particular offering personified the fragrant life of the Lord, nothing that represented malice and wickedness was permitted. Our glorious Lord was unblemished in character and untarnished in nature. There was no sin in Him—He was

impeccable. His life exuded to God the fragrance of His own personal glories and excellencies.

Honey was the other substance which was positively excluded from this offering (v. 11). As leaven is the symbol of that which is evil, honey is that which is sweet in a natural sense. The human excellence which flowed from Christ and made Him the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One, was not from human origin but was spiritual and divine. The Lord Jesus Christ, inherently had that spiritual sweetness which pleased His Father, God.

Let us now consider the preparation of the offering. There were two ways in which this offering was to be prepared. First, it could be “baked in a pan” (v. 7). In the pan, the effect of the heat on the offering could be seen by the human eye. This would bring before us the outward or visible sufferings of the Lord. He suffered for righteousness sake. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). He Himself declared that, “They hated me without a cause” (Jn. 15:25). Prophetically, it was said of Him, “Reproach hath broken My heart, I am full of heaviness, there was none to pity, and none to comfort” (Ps. 69:20).

One puzzling feature of the Lord’s visible sufferings was expressed by the Psalmist when he wrote, “They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head” (Ps. 69:4). In His physical body He suffered reproach as He became the song of the drunkard, as He was maligned, hated, despised, and rejected.

The Lord also suffered visibly in His sympathy with others—at the grave of Lazarus (Jn. 11), and also as He wept over Jerusalem (Lk. 13). He suffered grievously in anticipation. As He

anticipated being made sin on the Cross, we read of “His strong crying and tears.” As we contemplate the blood-like sweat, despite the ministrations of the heavenly messenger, we are confounded at the depth of the suffering. He was ultimately crushed when wicked hands took Him and nailed Him to a Roman Cross. These sufferings were visible to the human eye, as our Blessed Redeemer was “baked in a pan.”

The second way in which this offering could be prepared was to be “baked in an oven” (v. 4). This would bring to our attention the unseen sufferings of Christ. Only the Lord Himself and His Father knew the extent of these invisible sufferings. As the darkness covered Calvary’s wicked scene, the Lord was precipitated into the blackness of the oven. There, for three hours, He was shut off from the eyes of men. During this time, God applied the heat of hell to His blessed Son to procure redemption for repentant sinners. It is also worthy of note that while this “baking” was taking place, there arose a sweet-smelling fragrance which pleased and satisfied God. In life and in death—in service, walk, and work, God in His infinite holiness found full satisfaction and delight in His Son.

Finally, let us look at who partook of this Offering. Verses 3 and 10 show us that Aaron and his sons ate what was left of the offering. In other words, the Meal Offering was all for God; when God had received His portion (v. 3), the remainder of the priestly family. This is a beautiful picture of believer-priests today feeding on the perfections and glories of the Man, Christ Jesus.

According to Lev. 6:14-18, this offering was to be eaten with unleavened bread. This would teach us an important Scriptural

lesson. Those who would feed upon Christ must be pure and holy and have no unconfessed sin in their lives. Furthermore, all those who touched the offering must be holy (Lev. 6:18). This reminds us that before we can enjoy Christ to the full, our lives must be holy and we must be separated unto God.

Notice also, that the offering had to be eaten in the Holy Place (Lev. 6:16). This would remind us of a truth once practiced but now almost forgotten, that our position, mode of life, person, and associations must conform to the holy character of God.

These then are God's requirements if we would feast to the full upon His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. "To Him be glory both now and forever" (2 Pet. 3:18).

Savior, Thou art enough

The mind and heart to fill;

Thy life to calm the anxious soul,

Thy love its fear dispel.

O fix our earnest gaze

So wholly, Lord, on Thee,

That with Thy beauty occupied,

We elsewhere none may see.

The Abundant Life: The Principle of Glorifying Christ

Jesus said “I came that they might have (eternal) life and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10.

The only way a person can obtain “eternal life” is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Many of God’s dear children do not progress beyond this experience.

They are saved and no more.

To have eternal life is great—but there is more to our faith than this.

Christ came not only to give us “eternal life,” but also to give us “abundant life.”

While all believers have “eternal life,” all believers do not have “abundant life.”

The Scriptural meaning of abundant life is as follows.

Something above the ordinary—superior in quality—life that is not constricted but overflowing. John 3 The Infilling—John 4 The upspringing—John 7 The outflowing.

Believers are living beneath their privilege and God’s fullness for them, if they are not enjoying this superior and overflowing life in Christ.

For a believer’s life to be above the ordinary it must have inexhaustible resources.

These unlimited resources can only be found in Christ.

John 14:6 “I AM the Way—the Truth—and the Life.” My God shall supply all your needs.”

To enjoy abundant life we must walk in fellowship with Christ. Abundant life depends on our going in and out and finding rich pasture.

In feeding upon Christ He will impart life which is rich in unfailing exuberance and quality unsurpassed. Mary of Bethany.

To continue to enjoy this blessedness we must “abide in Christ” John 15:1-5.

Dynamic—vigorous—abundant life is not for a few, it is God’s criterion for all His people. Fruit—more fruit—much fruit.

This abundant life in Christ, is spiritual life in depth. Richness and quality.

Without it Christian life becomes meaningless—purposeless—hollow and empty.

See Jeremiah 8:13. Two evils—forsaken Me—hewn out cisterns, broken cisterns etc.

The fleshly life is circumstance-controlled.

The abundant life is spirit-controlled.

The fleshly life which momentarily appears to be satisfactory, leads to defeat—disappointment—and frustration.

The abundant life leads to victory in Christ.

It is conquering—triumphant—exultant and vibrant.

From this very moment, may we each determine not to be satisfied with anything less than God’s best.

(1) *The abundant life is a yielded life. Romans 6:10-13*

Surrendered—relinquished—delivered up life. We can glorify Christ in a yielded life.

How to live an abundant life in Christ is an open secret. See Verse 10.

Christ is our example.

“For in that He died, He died unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.” When the Lord died—He died to sin—the world—the flesh—and the devil. See also Verse 2.

According to Verse 11 every believer should consider himself to be dead unto sin.”

This is an unequivocal biblical truth which is misunderstood and sadly neglected.

Our old man is crucified with Christ. Verse 6. See also Colossians 3. Dead.

The body of sin is rendered inoperative. See also Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified.”

Being dead to it we are freed from it. Verse 7.

It is when a believer enters this truth experientially, realizing that the death of Christ, has severed the link that bound him to the world and has freed him from the dominion of sin, that he is liberated to walk in newness of life, and express spiritual life in its fullness.

The second part of Verse 11 says: “We are alive unto God, Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are dead to sin—but alive unto God—Resurrection power at our disposal. Immeasurable—unlimited—surpassing. Philippians 3:10.

The victorious life comes when we heed the injunction of Verse 12.

“Let not sin reign in your mortal body.”

Sin expresses itself through the members of the body; through this channel it controls the natural man and the carnal Christian.

A believer in whose body sin reigns, cannot live the abundant life and cannot glorify Christ. Only those who are set free from sin can enjoy the blessedness of unrestricted life in Christ. See Verse 2 “Dead to sin.”

Verse 13 exhorts us to withdraw the members of our body from being instruments of unrighteousness. Eyes—ears—lips—hands—feet—mind—heart—everything. This is an act of the will.

Next, we are admonished to yield ourselves to God, as those who are alive, from the dead.

This yielding is a once for all decision. E B Meyer “Take all the keys Lord.”

It is a surrender and a complete abandonment of one’s self.

Livingston’s last birthday—Jim Elliot’s prayer.

As we surrender we swing wide the door of our life to receive and distribute the outpouring of God’s power.

It is faith that yields the body—the total man. Daniel 3:16-18.

This faith identifies us with the risen Christ, and ensures the abundant life.

Beloved it is a good thing to have eternal life.

It is another thing to have abundant life by faith, here and now, life that is vibrant and vigorous—filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is one thing for you to live in Christ.

It is another thing for Christ to live His life in you. 2

Corinthians 5:17 “If any man be in” etc. Colossians 1:27 “Christ in you” etc.

Verse 13 leaves the believer with a choice. The yielded life.

You may yield your life to God, and allow Him to live His life in you.

Think for a moment of the possibilities of such a choice.

Isaiah said—“Here am I send me.” Preceding each yielding there is a revelation of the glory of Christ.

Paul said—“What wilt Thou have me to do.”

The Lord said—“Not My will but Thine be done.” “As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you.”

God wants each of His children to know the joy and power of a yielded life. This power will lift you above the circumstances that would ordinarily hinder abundant life in Christ.

This life which is superior in quality and overflowing begins when you yield your life to Christ as Lord and Master. I love my Master—wife—children etc.

(2) The abundant life is a dedicated life; unrestricted and overflowing. Romans 12:1-2.

It is a Christ glorifying life.

To live this abundant life you must serve the Lord Jesus.

Hands filled this day for the Lord—consecration. John 4:32-34. John 17:4. Psalms—Hebrews.

The Lord Himself is our example—as the Perfect Servant He served even to the death of the Cross. “I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” etc.

In consequence of this, no sacrifice should be too great to make for our Lord and Master. Note Paul’s example in 2 Corinthians 11.

In Verse 1 each believer is urged to present or yield his body in an unbridled—unblemished—and unbiased sacrifice, to serve the Lord.

This is a volitional surrender to the will and service of God.

“Make me a captive Lord—And then I shall be free—Help me to render up my sword—And I shall conqueror be.”

Quote part of “Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee.”

“Take my love, my God I pour at Thy feet its treasure store. Take myself and I will be ever only all for Thee.” Consecration of Priests.

This yielding is an act of faith—for you may not know what God’s will is for you. Describe some of the spheres of service.

To serve fruitfully and live victoriously the Lord must be in control of the total man. Spirit—Soul—and Body.

Paul yielded his body and presented Himself as a living sacrifice.

During his life he was constantly being poured out as a drink offering.

He describes himself as a “bond-slave of Jesus Christ” Romans 1:1.

As a slave he had no right—he belonged to the Lord.

His ear had been bored through with Gods awl. He was branded for Christ, “I bear in my body the Master.”

In the will of God he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ—Never of Rome.

His prison experiences were part of God’s perfect will for him. “What he must suffer.”

With firm conviction that the circumstances that sought to overwhelm him, was the will of God for him, he lived abundantly and triumphantly.

He used his circumstances to serve God and preach the Gospel, Philippians 1:13.

He experienced the all-sufficient grace of God, day by day.

He wrote “For me to live is Christ.” “I believe God.”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

“I have fought a good fight.”

“I have finished my course.”

“I have kept the faith.”

Pain—suffering—disappointment—imprisonment did not deter him from a life of dedicated service. Thorn in the flesh.

Even death to Paul, was not defeat—but Victory.

It was a release from physical pain—it was a finishing of the course.

It was the glorious entrance into the presence of his Lord and Master.

Paul was in life triumphant—in service fruitful—in death victorious.

We hear him say: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

Stephens example, Acts.

It should be the desire of every believer to be transformed into the Lords image.

To be totally yielded to a life of devoted service.

To live victoriously in the midst of declension and departure.

Appeal here for a metamorphosis experience. “Be ye transformed” Verse 2.

Tell of the young missionary in Laos.

(3) The abundant life is a separated life and a Christ glorifying life. Romans 1:1.

This separation is both positive and negative.

To experience the joy and fulfillment of the abundant life of Christ.

1. We must be separated unto the Gospel of God. This is the positive aspect.

Taking Paul as an example we find that his life was dominated by Christ.

All the boundaries of his life were determined by Him.

Paul was separated by God before his conversion. Galatians 1:15

He was separated by Christ at his conversion. Acts 9:15

He was separated by the Holy Spirit after his conversion. Acts 13:2

Paul was really separated to God. John the Baptist.

This is the experience of every believer who is living and enjoying the abundant life.

Secondly, the negative aspect of this truth, is that we must come out from everything that is contrary to the will of God. 2 Corinthians 6:17

Note the two aspects of the death of Christ.

1. It was to save our souls.

2. It was to save us from the world. Titus 2:14

“The Lord gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness. To purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works.”

As Soldiers—Athletes, Runners—and Farmers, we are to be totally abandoned to Christ.

To be separated means to be sanctified—set apart for service.

1. The Word of God has the power to separate the believer from sin. John 17:17, Psalms 119:11.

2. God the Father has power to separate the believer to the coming of the Lord Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

3. God the Son has the power to separate us to righteousness and sanctify us by the washing of water by the Word—having no spot or wrinkle. Ephesians 5:24-27

4. God the Holy Spirit has the power to separate us unto salvation and service. 2 Thessalonians 2:13. It is the desire of God that we should be separated from the world. Ephesians 4 and 5.

A believer may, without being separated, have a relationship with God.

But there can be no real fellowship with him. 2 Corinthians 6. See also 1 John 1.

A believer is united to Christ in Calvary—but can be separated from Him in sin. Isaiah 59:2. Hebrews 12 “Without holiness no man can see the Lord.”

Without this separation to God a believer may have influence—but no power.

He may have movement—but no achievement. The artificial bird on the glass of water.

He may serve—but will not succeed.

Beloved without the Scriptural separation to God, and from sin, our whole Christian life will be wood—hay—stubble. 1 Corinthians 3.

Every believer can be a John or a Judas—a Paul or a Pilate.

Boundless possibilities for good or evil—for fruitfulness or worthlessness.

(4) The abundant life is a Spirit-filled life and a Christ glorifying life. Ephesians 5:18-21. 1 Corinthians 6:19. Romans 8:9.

It is elementary for me to remind you that the Holy Spirit dwells in you.

It is one thing for you to have the Holy Spirit.

It is another thing for the Holy Spirit to have you. D.L. Moody's experience "I've got all daddy" etc.

The abundant life is not found in environment or circumstances, nor in the things we possess.

It is only found in the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

It is God's desire that every believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the Word of Christ, and filled with the fullness of God.

"Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

Notice the contrast in the verse.

Drunkenness with wine—and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

1. A person who is drunk is controlled by the alcohol.

They say and do things that they would never say or do in their normal condition.

2. On the other hand it is God's desire that the believer should be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Under the Spirit's influence he is able to say and do things which he could not say and do under normal circumstances.

This blessed condition ought to be the ongoing experience of every believer.

A believer should be habitually and continually filled with the Spirit.

What Is the Filling of the Holy Spirit?

The infilling John 3. The upspringing John 4. The outflowing John 7.

There is no Scriptural warrant for believing that when some strange—ecstatic—emotional feeling sweeps over us that we are necessarily filled with the Spirit.

One of the evidences of the filling of the Spirit is found in Acts 4:31.

“Then were they all filled with the Spirit, and they spoke the Word with boldness.”

Notice the similarity between Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19.

The results of being filled with the Word of Christ is similar to being filled with the Spirit of God.

We deduct from this then, that the Word-filled believer is the Spirit-filled believer who enjoys the blessing of the fullness of God.

The result of this unbroken communion with the Father through the Word and in the Spirit is a deep-rooted joy that expresses itself in psalms—hymns—and spiritual songs.

The Spirit-filled believer will be singing and making melody with all his heart unto the Lord.

He will be giving thanks continually for all things.

He will walk humbly before his brethren in the fear of God.

The Spirit-filled believer will be characterized by three things Joyfulness—thankfulness—and lowliness.

Some examples of those who were filled with the Spirit.

Martin Luther led the Reformation before he was thirty.

At 25 years Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were princes among preachers.

At 30 years Jesus Christ was sounding forth the Gospel which would revolutionize the world.

To maintain the joy—power—and victory of the abundant life we must be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4, Acts 4:13.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be Spirit-possessed—Spirit empowered—Spirit led—and Spirit controlled. Acts 8:26-40.

(5) The abundant life is a mature life and a Christ glorifying life. 2 Peter 3:18.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

A mature life is one which is fully developed—fully grown.

The Christian should be continually growing—the Christian life is never static.

If we do not progress in divine things then there will be regression.

We will be caught up in the tide of worldliness, and carried away in the stream of life, from the Lord. The example of the Lord. As a child He became strong in spirit—filled with wisdom. As a young man He increased in wisdom and stature, Samuel. The Scriptures reveal four stages of spiritual growth in the Christian life.

1. The baby stage. 1 Corinthians 3:1-4.

Paul is addressing believers who have been saved for some time.

New Christians are not involved here.

He describes these believers as being carnal or fleshly and little babies.

Their conduct is described in Verse 3 thru 5. Envy—strife—division—following man.

Here are some characteristics of a baby.

It thinks only of self—if denied the things it wants it raises a rumpus—its feelings are easily hurt—it lives to be served—it cries but never sings—it tries to talk but never makes sense.

These infant characteristics are prominent in all immature believers.

These, unfortunately, have never developed spiritually.

In this immature condition they do not enjoy abundant life.

2. The little child stage. 1 John 2:12.

Some believers progress a little and become little children spiritually.

Having reached this stage, despite the passing of years, they do not develop.

Here are some characteristics of children.

They are often untruthful—if rebuked they become martyrs—very often they make a scene—they are tale-bearers, repeating everything they hear—they are given to emotional outbursts—they seek the things that appeal to self—they are easily puffed up.

Beloved, is this a picture of you?

Any believer in this low spiritual state cannot enjoy nor experience the thrill of the abundant life. Why are there so many little children among us?

Spiritual dwarfs. Thirty year old's with three years of age mentality. Undeveloped.

3. The young man stage. 1 John 2:13 and 14.

John divides those to whom he wrote into three groups. Little children—young men and fathers.

In doing this he had in mind their spiritual maturity, or their growth in grace.

The young men (spiritually) were engaged in a spiritual warfare, and had overcome the wicked one.

The reason for their strength, success and overcoming abilities was because the Word of God abode in them. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path.”

This spiritual growth and maturing in grace and strength is not reached by many.

Those who reach this stage are active, strong, virile, and well equipped to overcome all enemies.

They have a vision for the future, and have faith and courage to tackle it in the Lord's name.

They have put away childish things and live abundantly in Christ, the joy of the Lord is their strength. “When I was a child I thought—understood—and spoke” etc.

“When I became a man I put away childish things.”

They are crucified with Christ, nevertheless they live, Christ lives in them.

The glories of His person are so enthralling, that the tawdry things of the world are as nothing. They live abundantly.

4. The father stage 1 John 2:13

This state of spiritual maturity can be reached by all—but so few ever attain to it.

The true spiritual fathers have known the Lord intimately over the years.

They have walked with the Lord through life, and through the valley of the shadow.

As they have grown spiritually they have been enveloped in the things of Christ.

The spiritual fathers have been active in the work of the Lord.

They are men of the book, and walk daily with Christ.

They have lived and labored for others.

They know the Lord in His fullness. They live in fellowship with Him.

They know Him and appreciate Him.

Consequently, the world has lost its attraction, and power, because Christ has filled their vision and satisfied their heart. They live abundantly. I have Christ, what want I more.

Some Thoughts on Prayer

Luke 18:1

Webster's definition of prayer is interesting. He says it is an earnest request—an entreaty—a supplication—it is spiritual communion with God.

Burns, the Scottish national poet said, that, “Prayer is a correspondence fixed with heaven.”

A survey of the Scripture shows us that prayer has many different facets. Supplications—prayers—intercessions—giving thanks. It means to ask—to beseech—to call God to one's assistance.

Prayer should also denote the acknowledging of a need—then an asking—an entreaty to God for the fulfilling of that need.

All prayer should be addressed to God—offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note our advantages over O.T. saints. The Holy Spirit is the sole interpreter of our needs. He is the One who makes intercession for us before God. Rom 8. We are exhorted to pray in the Spirit.

James says that, “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” This means that the prayer, in wrought by the Holy Spirit, of a righteous man greatly prevails with God.

Faith is essential to prayer (answered). Without faith impossible to please. There must be unshaken faith in His love, wisdom and power. Matt 21:22. “And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, ‘Believing,’ ye shall receive.” Jas 1:5-8.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith

with no hesitating or doubting. For the one who doubts is like the waves of the sea, blown hither and thither by the wind. Let not such a person think that he will receive anything he asks from the Lord.”

Faith is the recognition of the Omnipotence of God. The committal of ourselves and our affairs to the faithfulness of God.

From earliest of times man has practiced prayer or communion with God. Adam communed with God. Enoch walked with God, that is, he communed with God continuously. Noah walked with God also. These men maintained an unbroken communion with God.

The prayers of the patriarchs and prophets were more than a recital of well-known and well-worn phrases—to them prayer was the out-pouring of the heart. These men of God knew little of the mechanics and philosophy of prayer, but they certainly knew a great deal about its power.

This brings us to approach our subject with the prayer of the disciples, “Lord teach us to pray” Luke 11.

The power of prayer.

Let us look at a few examples of the power of prayer. Nehemiah—Moses. Daniel 6:10. “Daniel went into his house—opened his windows toward Jerusalem—kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed—and gave thanks before his God—as he had always done.”

Notice these features in this prayer:

1. Place of prayer - “he went into his house.”
2. Courage in prayer - “His windows being opened.”

3. Direction in prayer - “toward Jerusalem.”
4. Attitude for prayer - “He kneeled upon his knees.”
5. Regularity in prayer - “Three times a day.”
6. Thanksgiving in prayer - “Gave thanks before his God.”
7. Continuances in prayer - “As he did previously.”

In praying, he defied the king and his own enemies. He was delivered from the lions—his would be murderers were themselves killed by the lions—Daniel prospered—and finally God was glorified.

In Chapter 9 we see Daniel praying again. This time there are tremendous issues at stake. Daniel has been reading Jeremiah 25, and realizes that the seventy years of captivity are almost over. He knew his people were unprepared to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem.

Daniel began to pray. The result of his prayers was that God prepared 42,000 people to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1 also tells us that Daniel’s prayers stirred the heart of king Cyrus. He let the faithful go. As the result of Daniels prayers there took place one of the greatest revivals in Israel’s history.

The prayer of Daniel moved God to stir king Cyrus, prepare 42,000 people to leave Babylon, return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God. Brethren and Sisters, prayer works and is powerful. We have a decided advantage in prayer, over the Old Testament saints.

(1) Their prayers in the majority of cases were taken up with secular temporal things. The New Testament urges believers to pray for and seek after “spirit blessings.” Eph 1:3. Ours is a fuller revelation than that enjoyed by saints in the old economy.

(2) Another decided advantage we have is that of using the name of Jesus in our prayers to God. Even the mightiest intercessors of old did not use the name of Jesus. Jesus said “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name” John 16:2. The full merit of the Cross could not be pleaded until Christ’s atonement was complete. Now in all confidence we can rely on the Lord’s declaration, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, ‘in my name,’ He will give it to you.” John 16:23.

(3) The third prayer-advantage in this age is the pledge of Christ to act as our personal Intercessor. “I will pray the Father for you.” John 14:16. Heb 7:25.

Such a power and resource was denied them.

*“Great Advocate! Almighty Friend!
On Thee our humble hopes depend;
Our cause can never, never fail
For Thou dost plead and must prevail.”*

(4) A further advantage we have is the fact that Christ assures us that He Himself will answer our supplication. “Whatsoever ye ask—that will I do.”

Not only are we authorized to use the peerless name of Jesus, we have His Word that He will hear and answer our prayers.

(5) One other advantage is that we have the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the realm of prayer. As the result of the finished work of Christ, the Holy Spirit in all His fullness has been given to us.

This is seen to advantage in the lives of praying saints in The Acts. It was the Spirit Who led them. He waits to lead us into “a broad land of unknown wealth.”

Notice how the early church put into effect our Lord’s teaching on prayer.

- The Church was born in the atmosphere of prayer. Acts 1:4.
- In answer to prayer the Spirit was poured out upon her. Acts 1:4 - 2:4.
- Prayer continued to be the Church’s native aim. Acts 2:42; 6:4,6.
- There remained in the Church’s thinking a close connection between prayer and the Spirit’s presence and power. Acts 4:31.
- In times of crises the Church had recourse to prayer. Acts 4:23; 12:5-12.
- Throughout the Acts church leaders emerge as men of prayer. 9:40; 10:9; 16:25; 28:8.
- These godly men urge other believers to pray with them. 20:28-36; 21:5.

Lack of prayer in the assemblies.

There is a lack of real prayer in most assemblies. There is little real waiting on God to know His mind and will. Few assemblies spend more than 15 to 20 minutes per week in prayer.

The time has come for assemblies to see prayer as fundamental and foundational or many will continue to drift. To avoid this drift some are trying all kinds of schemes and programs. Never does there seem to be a call to prayer. Time spent in the presence of God would find us:

1. Subdued by His Omnipresence.
2. Staggered by His Omnipotence.
3. Silenced by His Omniscience.
4. Solemnized by His Holiness.

Notice the request of the disciples. “Lord, teach us to pray.” They had learned somewhat of the connection between His virtuous life in public, and His secret life in prayer. He was a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. The disciples wished to be enrolled in His school of prayer.

While it is true that the youngest child can pray, it is also true that prayer is among the highest and holiest work to which a man can rise. Prayer is fellowship with the Unseen and most Holy One and the powers of the eternal world are placed at one’s disposal.

Jesus never taught anyone to preach, but He taught them to pray. It is more important to know how to address God than to address man. Power with God is primary—Power with man is secondary.

The parable of Luke 11 is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession.

1. There is “the love” which seeks to help the needy around us. “My friend is come unto me.”

2. Then “the need” which urges the cry: I have nothing to set before him.
3. Then follows “the confidence” that help can be had. Which of you shall have a friend, and say, “Friend lend me three loaves.”
4. Then comes the “unexpected refusal”—I cannot rise and give thee.
5. Then comes the persistence that takes no refusal. Because of his importunity.
6. The reward of persistent prayer. He will give Him as many as he needeth.

The above principles set forth the way of prayer and faith in which we can experience the blessing of God.

Another O.T. example of the power of prayer is given to us by James.

James 5:17-18. “Elijah was a man with the same nature as we have, he prayed ‘earnestly’ that it might not rain; and it rained not for the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Out of obscurity, Elijah bursts into the O.T. scene. 1 Kings 17. His first words were: “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.” (Standing).

This man had lived in the presence of God for a long time, and knew the mind of God. This man communed with God. This man of God shut up the heavens for 3 ½ years with a prayer. With the “key of faith” he locked up heaven and made Ahab

tremble. With the same key he opened heaven and the rain fell again. 1 Kings 18.

To encourage us to pray and receive answers James says that “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” There is more to this verse than many have discovered. The effectual—that is, the inwrought prayer—inwrought by the Holy Spirit.

The fervent prayer, the earnest—ardent—intense prayer. Of a righteous man—one who is right with God and his brethren in every respect. This kind of prayer, from this kind of person, greatly prevails with God and unleashes tremendous power. Romans 8:26-27.

From these examples some spiritual lessons are found.

1. Omnipotent God can be reached and moved through the prayer of faith. Come boldly to the Throne of Grace.
2. The men who brought response from God were godly men.
3. This leads us to believe that prayer is conditioned by our spiritual state. In backsliding prayer is the first thing to go. “God forbid that I should cease to pray.”

One does not need to be spiritual to preach, that is, to deliver sermons of homiletical perfection and ex-e-get-i-cal exaltitude.

By a combination of memory—knowledge—personality—plus well lined book shelves—and self-confidence, anyone can preach to tickle the ears of men. These give stones for bread, and serpents for fish.

Brethren, it is only the spiritual believers who can pray in the way that moves the hands of Him who moves the Universe.

See John 15. “He who dwelleth in the secret place, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91.

Jesus believed prayer to be a working force, a dynamic, rather than a doctrine, in a believer’s life. “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.”

In order for prayer to be a working force or a dynamic in one’s life there are certain conditions that must be met.

(1) There must be sincerity.

Sincerity is the first requisite of successful prayer. The Lord condemned the Pharisees for their long prayers—ostentation—hypocrisy and insincerity.

Luke 18:9-14 The Pharisee and Publican. God must be approached in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24. Like the Psalmist we must “yearn eagerly” for God, just as the deer pants after the water brook. Inner desire and urgency must characterize us as in the parable of the importunate or persistent friend.

(2) There must be humility.

For our prayers to be answered there must be the complete absence of pride or self-assertion.

James 4:3, “Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 All prayer should be for the glory of God. “If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 34:27 “Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, and didst mourn and weep before Him, He heard thy prayer.”

The Lord Jesus displayed the perfect attitude of complete abandonment to the will of God, when in the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. “Not My will, but Thine be done.”

(3) There must be forgiveness.

We cannot expect answers from God if we harbor an unforgiving spirit towards others. “When you stand praying, forgive.” Mark 11:27. Luke 11. In His Sermon on the Mount our Lord gave the four-fold exhortation to forgive one another if we expect answers to our prayers. Brethren, we reach the pinnacle of Christlikeness when we forgive. “Father forgive them” etc. In this blessed state of being like Christ claiming His all prevailing name, we have the right to expect answers to our prayers.

(4) There must be faith.

Faith is an unquestioning belief, it is complete trust and confidence. In the context of prayer, it is asking God for something, according to His will, and fully expecting that prayer to be answered. James said, “Let him ask in faith, not wavering—it shall be given him.”

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb 11:6.

All things are possible to him that believes. Mark 9:23.

The Lord also said, “For with God all things are possible. Mark 10:27.

Matt 21:22 “All things—ye ask—believing, ye shall receive.”

So then our prayer of faith takes us to the God with whom all things are possible and from whom we can expect miracles.

Matt 17:20. The Lord mentions “faith as a grain of mustard seed.” This is one of the smallest of seeds. Jesus said, that even if your faith is very small, but is real, you can remove mountains of difficulties, as you draw from the eternal resources of the God of the impossible. If ye have faith and doubt not. Because of your own belief. Brethren, the formula for answered prayer is not great faith in a God but faith in a great God.

(5) Our prayers must be persistent.

This is the whole point of the parable of the friend coming at midnight begging bread. He was persistent. Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8. Ask—Seek—Knock.

When we pray in the Spirit, we must demonstrate Jacob’s spirit when he said, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Despite difficulties and apparent failures, even though the heavens are silent, we must pray on in the Spirit. We must wrestle like Jacob.

Pant and yearn like David.

Hope like Elijah.

Persistent like Bartemaeas.

Crying with tears like our Lord.

(6) We must pray in the Spirit.

The Scriptural way to pray is in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. The prayers that are answered are those that are

inwrought by the Spirit and therefore in accordance with God's will. We must learn how to pray in the Spirit.

Eph 6:18. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

Jude20. "Praying in the Holy Spirit."

"What does praying in the Holy Spirit mean?" Our prayers will be inspired and led by Him. We will be prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for certain things. To pray in the Spirit means, to consciously place ourselves under the Holy Spirit's influence. It is He who makes our conscience sensitive to sin and inspires prayer. God delights to hear.

The Lord's seasons of prayer.

There is a beautiful paradox here. Our Lord lived in unbroken fellowship with the Father, yet a study of His life shows Him many times in prayer for guidance.

The Lord prayed whenever the need arose. He prayed late at night after others had retired. He prayed before and after important events. It was His custom to steal away and pray where the noises of earth were hushed.

Time does not matter, because God's ear is ever opened to our cry.

David prayed all day. Psalm 55:17.

Daniel prayed at noon. Daniel 6:10.

Paul and Silas prayed at midnight. Acts 16:25.

The Lord sometimes prayed all night. Mark 1:35.

At all times we have access into the presence of God. He is a God who never sleeps.

No matter where we are, God can hear us.

- He heard Hagar in the wilderness.
- He heard Jonah in the belly of the fish in the depths of the ocean.
- He heard Hezekiah on his bed.
- He heard David in a cave.
- He heard Peter on a ship.
- He heard the thief on a cross.

The greatest blessing of Christ's life came as the result of unbroken fellowship with God. Prayer was His life and it brought unmeasured power.

Preparation for Participation in the Lord's Supper

What is your normal practice of preparation—or do you prepare at all? For years I have made it a practice to keep short accounts with God throughout the week and, if at all possible, to be quiet on Saturday night. Spending these crucial hours in quiet meditation has been a profitable exercise for me; in my worship and service of the Lord's Day, it has paid tremendous dividends.

Unfortunately, this solemn and scriptural method of preparation for the Lord's Supper is the exception rather than the rule. It is common knowledge among us that many of the Lord's people will, on a Saturday night, watch all kinds of sports, sometimes with a late movie thrown in. Beloved, these activities, while gratifying to the flesh, will not prepare the heart to meet the King on Sunday morning.

A friend of mine was summoned to appear before Her Majesty the Queen. This was one of the greatest days in his life. With the summons came instructions as to how he should dress. He must wear morning dress, which included a gray top hat, tails, striped trousers, and black shoes. When he arrived at Buckingham Palace, he was escorted into a room and given specific guidance as to how he should enter and exit the presence of Her Majesty. He was directed to approach her from the side, then face her, and from that given point, proceed to his designated place before her. At the conclusion of the interview and after presentation of the decoration, he should withdraw backward to a certain point, then walk off to

the side. He received strict instructions that under no circumstances must he turn his back on Her Majesty.

Beloved, we do not go to meet Her Majesty the Queen at the Lord's Supper. We go to meet His Majesty the King of kings and Lord of lords. If it is so important for those who are presented to the Queen to be properly attired and instructed in protocol, how much more important it is for us to be suitably attired and spiritually prepared when we come to worship His Majesty.

In the 22nd chapter of his Gospel, Luke says that Jesus:

Took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me." Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

The inference here is that we also drink of the cup in remembrance of Him. In 1 Cor. 11, Paul writes,

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of Me." After the same manner also He took the cup and after he had supped, said, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood; this do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Three times over the phrase is mentioned, "This do in remembrance of Me."

With these thoughts in mind, let us consider a few truths relative to the purpose of the Lord's Supper. There are at least

“four looks” that we should consider if we are to remember the Lord acceptably:

First, we must “look in.” There should always be a period of self-examination before worship. Second, during our worship there should be a “look back,” a worshipful look at the pre-incarnate glories of Christ, as well as His redemptive work on the Cross. The gold, frankincense, and myrrh aspects of the Lord’s life and character should be constantly under review. Third, we should have a “look up” to where the Christ of God is sitting at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor. Fourth, there should be a “look forward” to the Lord’s coming.

We seldom reach these last two points in our worship meetings. We leave with our blessed Lord hanging on the Cross while in reality, He is exalted to the apex of the universe,

God having raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1:20, 23

Paul also exhorts us to remember the Lord “till He come.”

When we are gathered together to break bread, we are announcing to the world, to the angels, and to ourselves, that the Lord is coming soon. The Lord’s Supper should not only be a place of sorrow, it should be a time of anticipation and rejoicing:

I am waiting for the coming

*Of the Lord who died for me
O His words have thrilled my spirit,
“I will come again for thee.”
I can almost hear His footfall
On the threshold of the door,
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be with Him evermore.*

Let us give some further thought to the “look in” part of our preparation. Paul exhorts us to take an introspective look at ourselves when he says, “Let a man examine himself.” It is my considered opinion that it is a veritable impossibility to remember the Lord and worship acceptably unless we have first examined and judged ourselves. There must be self-analysis and an in-depth, soul-searching self-judgment, followed by an uninhibited disclosure of our real selves to God, before there can be true worship. Following this soul exposure, there should be full confession and repentance of all known sin. My beloved, do you know anything of this heart-moving, spiritual exercise before remembering the Lord? We are prone to tell sinners that they should confess and repent of their sins. Now the finger of God is pointing at us. If we have any unconfessed sin in our lives, we should get it out into the open before God, confess it, and repent of it. When we have done this, we are in a fit state to remember the Lord and worship God.

Furthermore, before participating in the Lord’s Supper, we should judge our motives as well as our actions. They should be brought up front and carefully analyzed. This applies to

older brethren as well as young men. What is the purpose of our going to the Lord's Supper? Whom do we remember? In John 12, the crowds did not come to Bethany to see Jesus, they came to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. The wise men came to worship the King. Wise men still come to worship the King. The disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration saw "no man except Jesus." Do we really come to the Lord's Supper to see Jesus, and worship Him?

What is the basic purpose for our attending the Lord's Supper? Is it to be heard? Is it to act on a sudden impulse? Is it simply to share the Word of God with those who are present? There are those who would turn the Lord's Supper into a sharing meeting. The purpose of this unique meeting is not for sharing; it is wholly and solely for the worship of God, and for remembering Jesus at His own request. With regard to sharing, there is nothing wrong with sharing some experiences with one another, but, in God's name, let us preserve the unparalleled extraordinariness, the stateliness, the splendor, and the sublimity of the Lord's Supper and have another meeting at another time for sharing and caring.

In Luke 22, and 1 Cor. 11, the words "remember Me" are mentioned three times directly and once by inference. Why does the Lord want us to attend this unique meeting? It is to "remember Him." This is the sole purpose of our going to the Lord's Supper. Everything and everyone must be submissive to Jesus Christ. The incomparable glory, majesty, and the unsurpassed dignity of His person should saturate everyone in the gathering. All human relationships, earthly and worldly, should pale into insignificance. The atmosphere at the Lord's Supper should be charged with the glory of the Lord Jesus in

the same way it was on the Mount of Transfiguration. On this occasion, Jesus Christ stood supreme; not even the best of men could be compared to Him. When Peter equated the Lord with Moses and Elijah, God enveloped the scene in Shekinah glory, and when the cloud was removed they saw “no man except Jesus.” When we attend the Lord’s Supper we, too, should see no one except the Lord Jesus, and we should worship Him alone.

Over the years there has developed among us a tendency to minister the Word at the Supper. More often than not, this ministry is of a general nature, and has little to do with the object of our gathering. I am of the opinion that if ministry is given before the breaking of bread, that ministry should be focused upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. As we listen to this Christ-exalting ministry, our hearts are softened and we are drawn closer to Him and our capacity for worship is increased. This kind of ministry is the only ministry that is profitable before the breaking of bread.

There is vast difference between “ministry” and “worship.” Ministry, in its ideal form, comes down to us from God, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit; then it is delivered through the instrument whom God has prepared and gifted for this purpose. This is ministry in its ideal sense. Unfortunately, all ministry does not come up to this standard.

Worship is something altogether different. Worship is generated in the heart. Then it ascends through the Holy Spirit, to the Son, Who then presents it to the Father in all the value of His glorious Person. Ministry descends from God. Worship ascends to God. Since worship is the highest form of

service a believer can engage in, we should reach for the Highest.

Our late brother, A.P. Gibbs, differentiates between PRAYER—THANKSGIVING—and WORSHIP. He said, “PRAYER IS A SOUL OCCUPIED WITH ITS NEED.” There are meetings in which it is proper to pray. That’s why the prayer meeting is held. The Lord’s Supper is not the place to pray. The Lord’s Supper is the place to remember the Lord and to worship Him.

“PRAISE OR THANKSGIVING IS A SOUL OCCUPIED WITH ITS BLESSINGS.” There is nothing wrong with being occupied with our blessings. The Psalmist said it was a “good thing to give thanks to the Lord,” but in this sphere one does not reach God’s ideal.

“WORSHIP IS A SOUL OCCUPIED WITH GOD ALONE.” The Father seeketh such to worship Him. Many of God’s dear children, despite their knowledge of the Scriptures, have not been able to burst through the ceiling of praise and thanksgiving and enter through the veil into the uttermost sanctuary, the most holy place, and there worship the Lord in beauty of holiness.

When we are in the Spirit and are being controlled by Him, we can enter into a deep and moving spiritual experience as we worship God, and be nearer to heaven than anywhere on earth.

To worship in spirit and in truth can be costly. It can be costly in time. We may be misunderstood if we absent ourselves from certain activities as we seek to prepare our hearts to worship at the Lord’s Supper. Psalm 45 says, “My heart is overflowing with a good matter, I speak of the things which I have made as

touching the King.” The Psalmist’s heart was overflowing with the worship he “had made.” It takes time to generate worship. It takes time to prepare the heart for worship. We do not learn to worship in a seminary or Bible school. We can learn many good things there but they cannot teach a person to worship. No one can teach another to worship. The only place you can learn to worship is in “St. Mary’s College” at Jesus’ feet. Mary learned, wept, anointed, and worshipped at Jesus’ feet.

If you feel you are not close enough to Jesus at His feet, rise a little higher and, like John, lean on the Savior’s breast, and there recline; listen to His every heart-beat; hear the sighs that escape from His lips; relish the words that drop like honey from His mouth; look into His blessed eyes that tell of His deep, deep love; gaze into His face that was marred more than any man’s, dumbfounded at the nail-scarred hands and feet and the riven side. This is where we will learn to worship, but to gain this deep insight into the heart of the Lord can be costly.

For Mary to worship the Lord was a costly but blessed experience. Three hundred pence was a year’s wages for a working man. Mary invested her life savings in that ointment. In giving it all to Him, she showed her boundless love for Jesus. She poured every last drop of that precious and costly ointment upon His blessed person. The Lord Jesus was never more honored in His life.

When we come together at the Lord’s Supper, God does not want our tongues as such, neither does He want our talents. He really does not want our word of ministry, unless it is in the Spirit. The Lord Jesus wants all our love and worship. Mary gave Him both—she gave her all.

Several years ago I watched (on television) some war veterans return to the shores of Normandy. With great emotion, they visited the scenes of former brutal battles. Later, they visited the graves of their friends who had died in battle. Finally, the camera focused on a gravestone bearing the name of a young man, nineteen years of age. Underneath the name was the inscription, "He gave his all." This young man gave everything he had for us; he gave his all for his King and country. Beloved, what have we given to the Lord Jesus? Have we given Him our lives? Have we given Him our worship? Have we given Him our all? At the Lord's Supper and at home, we have the opportunity to do this.

Yes, it is costly to worship. It was costly for Abraham. He said to the young men, "Saddle the ass and let us go up and worship God." At one point the worship of God cost Abraham his son, the son that he loved with all his heart. He was willing to sacrifice his most precious possession in order to worship God acceptably, there must be preparation of heart; there must be sacrifice and consecration of mind and body. We must know what it means to "have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." It is in this sublime, spiritual state that we are fit to enter the Lord's presence and worship Him.

There is also a solemn warning issued to those partaking and participating in the Lord's Supper. In Lev. 10, we read the story of two young priests who were impetuous and zealous. They rushed into the presence of God and offered strange fire; for doing this they lost their lives. Beloved, we cannot attend the Lord's Supper, break bread, and partake of the wine in an unprepared state and do and say anything we like.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that they could not gorge themselves with food and drink themselves into intoxication at the love feast, then expect to worship the Lord at His Supper. They were not in a fit condition to discern the Lord's body and blood in the elements. For this grave error God visited this church in judgment. Some were sick, others were weak, and some had died. Brethren, if God were to visit the church in the same manner today, many would be turned into cemeteries.

When we come to remember the Lord, we come before the Creator, Upholder, and Sustainer of the universe. We come to remember the Lord of lords, and King of kings. We also come to remember the Lamb of God, crucified, and risen. The ascended One, glorified One, and the coming One.

When we come to worship, we should be cleansed from all sin. Our hearts should be tender and our baskets should be filled with first fruits, ready to worship in spirit and in truth.

The time has come for us to consider some of these grave principles. Before participating in worship we should take an introspective look at ourselves, engaging in deep, soul-searching self-analysis, so that when we appear before God, in the holiest of all, our hearts are clean and pure, then like a volcano will burst forth in adoration and worship.

Dan C. Snaddon

The Basis for the New Testament Assembly

Let us go back in history to two points in time, two beginnings. The first commenced almost 2,000 years ago but, for the moment, we will not discuss this. We will consider first the new beginning which took place approximately 150 years ago. At this time scriptural truths and principles, long hidden in ecclesiastical darkness, were rediscovered and there was an unprecedented movement of the Holy Spirit. His working in the hearts and lives of godly men was apparent, especially in Dublin, Ireland; in Plymouth and London, England; and in various places on the continent of Europe.

In later years, when church historians assembled all the facts, they discovered that this manifestation of the Spirit was not confined to Europe. In many parts of the world, the Spirit's presence and power were evident as He drew men and women from religious and worldly backgrounds and gathered them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Among those moved by the Holy Spirit were brethren who were spiritual giants—some of them ordained preachers—who came to be esteemed and respected in evangelical circles for their scholarly and meticulous translation of the Sacred scriptures. In retrospect, they may have been among the godliest men, raised up by God to represent Him in the world. Deeply concerned about the low spiritual state of the professing church, they also were heartsick and discouraged over the unscriptural practices in the various churches with which they were affiliated. Their deep-seated exercise of soul

led to a prayerful searching of the Holy Scriptures, to discern divine principles and practices.

The outgrowth of this spiritual awakening was the recovery of many precious truths, hidden for centuries in ecclesiastical tradition. You will observe that they searched the Book to discern the mind of God. They sought the Lord's guidance through the Holy Spirit and if we, today, are to be acquainted with the mind and will of God relative to church principles and practices, we must get back to the Book. Many foreign practices not in accordance with the Scriptures are being introduced into some assemblies. In these days of declension and departure, we must get back to God's Word and in simple faith follow the divine pattern.

What were some of the principles recovered at this time? By careful reading and analysis and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, these brethren discovered:

The true character of the New Testament assembly

The position of the believers as being in Christ—the truth of the eternal security of believers

The priesthood of all believers—in contrast to that of officiating clergy

The sufficiency of the Name of Christ—no other name

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the local body—presidency of the Holy Spirit

The pretribulation rapture of the Church

The premillennial coming of the Lord to the earth

The literal millennial reign of Christ on the earth

The keeping of the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis

These truths, long-hidden in obscurity, when rediscovered, led to an exercise of heart to practice them. It was a costly decision for some—they lost a great deal of this world's prestige when they withdrew from their religious affiliations and established what they believed to be of God.

Consequently, believers began to gather in a simple way in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the movement spread rapidly northward into Scotland and then into Northern Ireland. This phenomenal growth was attained because God was in it. Many spiritual believers were drawn by the Spirit from dead orthodoxy into these virile and dynamic New Testament assemblies, where New Testament principles were practiced with New Testament power.

These brethren, whom God called out, met in simple places in a simple way, trying to preserve the New Testament simplicity. Gifted men, raised by the Holy Spirit, began to teach:

The precious truth of the one body

The Lordship and Headship of Christ

The leadership of the Holy Spirit

They owed allegiance to no denomination.

They took no sectarian names; they chose rather to be known as believers—Christians—disciples—brethren.

They recognized no human head.

They sought to return to the New Testament pattern for

the Church: Simplicity.

Those godly men strove for collective unity. Here, also, is a point of interest. Two of their watchwords were: absolute unity and absolute purity. These watchwords ought to be sounded out from every platform, in every assembly. There has never been a time when we need to be united, there never has been a time when we need to be pure and clean and holy in the sight of God, more than today.

During the years since these pristine days, much of the simplicity has been lost. Some have sought to introduce a sectarian spirit. Others have developed an organizational unity, rather than unity of the Spirit. Let us be careful when arranging our assembly curriculum, lest we program the Holy Spirit out of our gatherings. May God grant us wisdom to give the Holy Spirit His place in our meetings. Despite the declension and departure, we thank God for those who stand fast, and who seek to strengthen the things that remain, and strive to preserve the New Testament simplicity as practiced by the early church.

Let us now go back to the beginning of the Church in the first century and consider some of the distinctive characteristics which it displayed, and also consider the scriptural principles which it practiced:

They Gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus

The first distinguishing feature that we observe is that they gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus was the gathering centre. The early disciples were held together by devotion to a Person, not by membership in an organization. Their lives revolved around the Lord. As they walked with Him,

they learned from Him. They loved Him so much that they were willing to obey divine principles to glorify Him, even if it meant suffering shame for His name. Their love and enthusiasm were zealously manifested:

They preached in His name (Acts 4:12).

They baptized in His name (Acts 10:48).

They performed miracles in His name (Acts 3:6).

They defied opposition in His name (Acts 4:18-20).

They suffered willingly in His name (Acts 5:41).

When a local assembly is patterned after this divine principle, and gathered unto Christ, then He is central, He is supreme, He is Lord. Thank God for every company of believers who reject all sectarian names and gather unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament speaks of assemblies composed of true believers, gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus, in many localities. To name a few: Jerusalem—Corinth—Rome—Ephesus—and the seven churches in Asia Minor.

They Were Independent

The second distinctive characteristic of these churches was that they were independent. They were autonomous and indigenous, that is to say, they were self-governing and self-producing. Paul describes these churches composed of believers, elders and deacons (Phil 1:1).

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a confederation of assemblies. There is no mention of a bishop over a diocese, and no superintendent over a group of churches. Each assembly was a sovereign unit; each was ruled by elders under

the direction of the Holy Spirit; each was independent of the others. The elders of each assembly will give an account of their work and will be held responsible by the Lord, at the Judgment Seat, as to how they conducted His affairs in the local church. Each was in subjection to Christ alone.

There Was a Spirit of Fellowship

Despite this evident scriptural autonomy, there was an obvious spirit of fellowship. These assemblies expressed their fellowship in practical ways:

They received all those whom Christ had received (Rom 15:7).

They accepted and supported the gifted servants of Christ who moved among them (1 Cor 16:9-12).

They gave letters of commendation to those who traveled (Rom 16:1-2). This is a scriptural practice which has almost fallen into disuse in certain circles. It is good and Scriptural to carry a letter of commendation with you when you travel in an area where you are not known.

Though these churches were independent, there were occasions

when they rendered financial assistance to the needy in other

assemblies (Rom 15:25-27). They were willing to give of their substance to their brethren who were in need.

The aforementioned are good scriptural practices which were observed by the first-century believers. We would do

well in the twentieth century to implement the principles of gathering unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, carefully guarding our independence and sovereignty as local churches, showing the love of Christ to all men, especially those who are of the household of faith. Such devotion and adherence to these divine principles would draw forth Blessings from a delighted God, that we would not be able to contain.

They Observed the Lord's Supper

One of the priorities of the first century church was to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). They broke bread and partook of the wine in memory of the Lord Jesus. You may not have noticed this, that there were times when, in their fervency, these brethren may have remembered the Lord daily (Acts 2:46). The Lord's Supper—the Breaking of the Bread—the Remembrance Feast was very special to them. Some years later, the churches adopted the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).

The Lord's Supper, in its simplicity, was another of the great truths which was lost in the rubble of ecclesiastical ceremony and antiquity. It was only 150 years ago that this important truth was rediscovered by godly men. From then until now, groups of believers have met each Lord's Day in response to the Lord's request to “remember Him,” until He comes.

The Breaking of the Bread, then and now, is a unique characteristic of the New Testament church. It was, and is, the high point of their regularly scheduled meetings. My present knowledge leads me to believe that there are no

other groups who keep the Lord's Supper in the way we do. This is another of the distinctives of the assemblies.

Occupied with the Lord Jesus Alone

The remembrance feast is unique in that we are occupied with the Lord Jesus alone. No Gospel is preached, no prayer requests are made. It is a time of intense adoration and worship, followed by the breaking of the bread and partaking of the wine. This time of remembrance and worship is among the most precious experiences this side of eternity.

I exhort the elders of all New Testament churches to exercise the utmost surveillance so that the character of the Remembrance Feast will remain undisturbed. There are those among us that would reduce this time of worship into a sharing and caring meeting. Beloved in Christ, I beseech you in the Lord's name, if you feel the necessity for a share and care meeting, then arrange it at an appropriate time but please preserve the simplicity, the Scripturalness, the sacredness, the sanctity, and the beauty of the Lord's Supper.

The Simplicity of the Lord's Supper

Note the simplicity of this meeting. It is wonderful that we do not have to grapple with the error of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. Neither are we vexed by the misconception of consubstantiation, which states that the bread and wine, after consecration, are side-by-side with the substance of the body and blood of Christ. It is beautiful that we can meet together in simplicity and practice what

the early church practiced: A simple table on which is placed a loaf of bread and a cup of wine. As we gather around these symbols, believing them to represent the body and blood of the Lord Jesus, how wonderful it is to meet in the simplicity of New Testament principles, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, to praise, worship, and break the bread and partake of the wine in loving memory of our crucified, risen, ascended, glorified and soon-coming Lord.

The Lord's Return for His Church

Another of the truths rediscovered 150 years ago, was the truth of the Lord's return for His church; the Rapture of the saints as a Scriptural principle, was lost in the medieval darkness of the medieval ages. To these godly and Spirit-filled men, we owe a debt of gratitude. We will never understand this side of eternity the deep spiritual exercise accompanied by prayers and tears, as these men of God carefully researched and analyzed the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit. We should thank God for the glorious truth of the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church.

The first-century believers accepted this precious truth. They rejoiced in the imminent return of the Lord. This blessed hope buoyed them up in the midst of trial and adversity. As the first-century believers left the Lord's Supper, they were filled with love for one another. They also had a great concern for the lost and because of this concern, evangelized wherever they went. They not only told of the Lord's death, they told of His glorious resurrection, His Ascension, and His coming again. These brethren were marked as men who were waiting for the Lord's return. They were little colonies waiting for the return of their

King. This was the blessed hope that lifted their hearts as they greeted each other with Maranatha—the Lord is coming.

O that we, today, could capture the blessed expectation of the Lord's return. In the twentieth century, so many have become entrenched in this world. Most of us have never had it so good, so long; we have become so absorbed with the things of the world that the truth of the coming of the Lord has lost its power in our lives. The Lord is coming—the Lord is coming—and He is coming soon, silently and suddenly, and every born-again believer will be raptured into His presence.

Expectancy, simplicity, spirituality and power were the hallmarks of the early church. Thank God for the faithful within the assemblies who seek to maintain the principles of the first-century church as they wait for the Lord's return.

The Activity of the Holy Spirit

Another characteristic of the early church was the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. A careful study of the Acts brings to our attention the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. Not only did the Lord give the Church a Book, He also gave them the Holy Spirit to guide, corporately and privately. One of the truths that we need to relearn today is that the Holy Spirit is coequal, coeternal, and coexistent with the Father and the Son. May God help us all to understand this great truth and grant us the undying desire to give this Blessed Person His rightful place in our midst.

The apostles put great faith in the Holy Spirit. When the early missionaries left those little house churches behind them, they did so confidently, knowing that the Holy Spirit would lead them, empower and equip them.

They believed that He would raise up spiritual gifts for their growth (Eph 4:11).

Each believer was taught that he had a function to fulfill in the body (1 Cor 12:12).

Each believer was taught that he was the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

They were taught that there was no such division as clerisy and laity (Gal 3:28).

Most of the meetings were informal; they were unstructured for the most part. In mixed meetings, where brethren and sisters were present, the men took leadership (1 Cor 14:34). Some led in a hymn, some in teaching, some in prayer or worship, some in exhortation. In this God-appointed way, spiritual gifts began to develop.

In time, some would emerge as teachers, and would be recognized as such; through them, God spoke to the local church. Others, by the Spirit, were gifted in the Gospel and became evangelists. Some were given shepherds' hearts by the Spirit; these became pastors in the Scriptural sense. The Holy Spirit was in complete control!

Do you wonder at the progress of these local churches? We would enjoy the same spiritual prosperity today if we

crucified the flesh and gave the Holy Spirit His rightful place in our gatherings.

The Sisters' Place in the Local Church

Another characteristic of the Scriptural assembly is the position it holds with regard to the sisters. Before continuing, let me say we owe more to the godly sisters among us than we realize or admit. The spiritual standard of our assemblies would be greatly impaired were it not for the impact of our godly women.

Following the example of the first-century church, we believe in the silence of the sisters in public meetings. The two outstanding scriptures which support this are 1 Cor 14:34-35, "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church," and 1 Tim 2:11-12, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

Alas, the winds of change are blowing. There are many among us who have challenged, and are challenging, this particular truth. Despite these attacks, the unalterable principles of Scripture remain immovable and support the truth of the silence of sisters in the public meetings. The carrying out of this divine principle is God glorifying.

While adhering to this teaching, we readily admit that there are many spheres in which sisters can serve, and in many instances more acceptably than brethren. We thank God for their faithful attendance at the meetings. Their absence would cut the audiences by at least 60 percent.

Most assemblies could not survive without their financial support. Their work in visitation is invaluable. In work of this type, situations arise which only a sister can deal with. Our Sunday Schools and extra-curricular activities among the young could not survive without their help. Our missionary endeavor would be greatly restricted were it not for the faithfulness and sacrifice of our dear sisters. Which one of us could estimate the value of their effectual and fervent prayers in any local gathering, or in the far-flung mission fields of the world. We should thank God for the dear sisters who, like Phoebe, are true servants of the church.

The Head Covering

Next, we come to the question of the head covering. It is unfortunate, but true, that many elders have become very lax in this matter. Some have turned a blind eye. All this, despite the teaching of 1 Cor. 11. Scriptural and spiritual assemblies believe and accept the teachings of the whole chapter. Not only do they believe in the weekly commemoration of the Lord's Supper, they also believe in the head covering described in the earlier verses.

You will notice that in this regard there are no problems with godly sisters. They are content to preach the greatest of all sermons, to man, and to angels, of the headship of man, the Headship of Christ, and the supreme Headship of God. Nothing brings more glory to God than this.

In these days of feminist movements, this position, with that of the silence of the women, is being seriously challenged. May God give us wisdom to handle it

Scripturally, honestly, and lovingly in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

No Ordained Preachers

Another of the characteristics of the Scriptural Assembly is that we do not believe in ordained preachers. Scriptural assemblies hold the position that there is no distinction between clergy and laity. In fact, they believe that clergy and laity do not exist in any form among believers. Paul left each local church he established in charge of local elders. These Spirit-filled men had authority in, and the rule over, the local company. They were the guides and leaders. May we all recognize that there is no higher authority in the assembly than Scripturally qualified elders. This is God's order.

Assembly Economics

Then there is the question of assembly economics. Assembly economics has always been a source of puzzlement to the uninitiated. A careful study will show that our financing of the Lord's work, in all its facets, is based on New Testament example. We should not, and do not, make public appeals for money. Despite this, God meets the recurrent needs, sometimes in unbelievable ways.

Another of the characteristics of the New Testament assembly is that we have no offerings when the unsaved are present. "Taking nothing of the Gentiles," (3 John 7). We also believe that there is sufficient instruction given in the Word as to how, when, and how much we should give (1 Cor 16:2).

Our giving to God of our substance should be an act of worship (Heb 13:15-16). This is one of the reasons the

offering is taken at the Lord's Supper. We should consider this last point seriously. In worship, we not only give our praise but we give of our substance.

Support of the Lord's Servants

Finally, there is the way our missionaries are supported. This is so different from the normal practice of other groups. Our dear brothers and sisters have gone forth as sent by God, not by a missionary society. While on the field they are controlled by God and are accountable to God. They live and work in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ, knowing that they shall give account to the Lord of the Harvest.

Many of these dear ones have left lucrative positions and assured futures, humanly speaking, and gone into places of hardship and danger, with no guarantee of financial support. Does this Biblical principle work today? It has been my personal experience, and that of every true servant of God, that God is able for every emergency and exigency. God is able to meet every need.

These, then, are some of the Scriptural principles recovered from the dust of ecclesiastical antiquity 150 years ago. These truths were practiced by some at great personal loss, but great spiritual enrichment. We, today, should give them our earnest and purposeful consideration. They should not be lightly cast aside for the unstable whims of modern thought.

The Christian Home (Ephesians 5)

An interesting truth emerges as we study the N.T. regarding men who were brought to Christ.

The home became their first sphere of testimony.

Mark 5:19 The demoniac man, recently healed was told by the Lord “To go home” etc.

Mark 1:29 When Peter left his fishing he took the Lord home.

Acts 16 The Philippian jailer, after his conversion, turned over his home to the Lord.

An open home for the Lord and His people is the stamp of reality of our faith in Christ. Lydia – Acts 16.

The greatest honor that a family can have is to have the Lord dwelling in their home.

Our conduct in the home.

V2 “Walk in love, as Christ has loved us.” First love.

This is the first requirement of an ideal Christian home.

That same love that thrilled you and prompted you to ask your partner to marry you, should be constantly displayed in the home.

Our love for each other should be similar to the love Christ has for us.

It is into such a home that Jesus will come, making it a veritable heaven upon earth.

Things to avoid.

Paul is very realistic in his code of conduct for the home.

V4 No foolish talking nor jesting, these things are not fitting to a Christian home.

We should not criticize another person, nor speak of the work at the Chapel in a condemnatory way before our children.

The secret of a good marriage is when both parents are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

V18 “Be filled with the Spirit.”

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit certain things will emerge in our home.

V19 Speaking to one another in Psalms. Singing and making melody with all your heart.

V20 Giving thanks for all things.

V21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Verse 22 Wives submit yourselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord.

Abraham Lincoln wrote:

The woman was not taken from Adam’s feet, we see

So we must not abuse her—the meaning seems to be.

The woman was not taken from Adam’s head, we know

To show that she must not rule him—‘Tis evidently so.

The woman—she was taken from under Adam’s arm

So she must be protected—from injuries and harm.

V25 “Husbands love your wives” etc. Even as Christ.

We husbands should love our wives as Christ loved the church and if necessary give our life for her.

The result of a marriage in the Lord is that two persons become one. V31.

One in person-in spirit-in purpose-one in the Lord.

Just as Christ and the Church are one. V32.

Paul continues.

Ch 6:4 Fathers do not provoke your children.

Ch 6:1 Children obey your parents in the Lord.

In closing Paul outlines the solemn duties of the spiritual wife and mother.

She should be sober minded i.e. serious.

She should love her husband-love her children.

She should be sensible-discreet-homemaker-kind and obedient to her own husband.

A home based on these principles will never falter nor fail-it will stand the test of time and the storms of life.

From such a home will come men and women of God.

Judas (John 13:18-30)

The story of Judas as it unfolds in the Gospels is interesting but tragic. It ends in total disaster. He was probably the only Judean in the little band of Galilean disciples that followed Jesus.

We do not know when he became a follower of Jesus—there is no record of his conversion. We do know that He was given the greatest opportunity ever offered to a man to become a true believer.

His name might have been immortalized forever, like the other disciples, and written on the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem. Instead, he has gone down in history as synonymous with treachery, treason and shame.

(1) First of all, notice that under a façade of profession he deceived his fellow disciples. He played his part as a disciple with profound skill. Consequently, he was accepted by them, and seemed to be in full fellowship with them in their love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus.

(2) Secondly, consider the part that Judas played in the Lord's program.

a. He was one of the disciples sent out to do evangelistic work in the Gospel teams.

b. It is reasonable to assume that he healed the sick in Christ's name.

c. He was given a position of honor and trust—that of treasurer. In fact he held the only office among them.

d. In all probability he, with the other disciples, cast out demons.

We do not find any evidence that the disciples suspected him of being a traitor. They believed him to be one of them. See Matthew 7. While Judas deceived the disciples—he never deceived the Lord. “Be not deceived, God is not mocked.”

Notice the Lord’s repeated appeals to Judas. He allowed Judas to sit at the table with Him. Passover Table. Giving the sop to him was the Lord’s last appeal to Judas. Favored quest. This was the traitor’s final refusal. The great tragedy.

Judas went out and it was night. In an agony of remorse he committed suicide. I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. Please note that this was remorse and not repentance.

This was a tragedy, considering the privileges he had in spending three years in the company of the Lord Jesus. What is God’s purpose in recording this story? He lives on the stage of Scripture as a solemn warning to the professing follower of the Lord Jesus. He leaves the Gospel story a doomed, and damned man. Eternal night.

He went to his own place—he actually prepared this place for himself. He has been there for almost 2,000 years suffering the tortures of the Christ rejecter. See Luke 16. “He that being often reprov’d” etc. “Flee from the wrath to come.”

For some it is easy to pose as a Christian, and then be accepted into the fellowship of a local church. Then to be baptized, and become active in the work, even to sit at the Lord’s Table, and to be like Judas not having a saving knowledge of Christ. Simon the sorcerer.

Appeal at this point for a searching of the heart...

*Profession in the religious sphere
A professing and declaring of
faith in Christ—true or pretending.*

Pretend to believe.

Act as if they believed.

*This pretense can be demonstrated
on purpose.*

*On the other hand this pretense
can be displayed unintentionally.*

*One can appear to believe, and
act as if they did believe.*

*But being ignorant of God's
claims and the true facts of
salvation make us appear
to be what we are not.*

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites.

Misery—wretchedness—sorrow—desolation—despair.

*“For you are like white-washed tombs, which look well from
the outside but within are full of all kinds of filth. Outside
you look like honest men, yet inside you are brim-full of
hypocrisy.”*

Matthew 23:27-28.

He went out immediately—and it was night. This night is described in Luke 16. In hell this man was in torments=torture. There were various things that brought about these torments.

(1) There was the agony of sight and recognition. This man saw Lazarus enjoying the blessings of heaven. The inhabitants of hell will recognize friends in heaven.

(2) The agony of thirst—this man cried out in agony for a drop of water.

(3) The agony of memory—Son remember etc. Memories will haunt us—memories of every sin we committed—every Gospel message we ever heard—every opportunity we had to receive Christ as Savior, but turned Him down.

(4) This man was conscious of a great chasm that could not be crossed. Every doomed and damned soul will have the consciousness that he is beyond hope. That he is irredeemable—irrecoverable—and irretrievable. He will be tormented by the consciousness that he is lost and lost forever in a mad, violent and horrifying place. No one will have any rest day or night. Memory will be the worm that dieth not, tormenting the soul forever and ever.

(5) Finally, this man pleaded with God for his brothers—there were five of them on their way to hell, and one was in hell. But the heavens were as brass—there was no answer.

Beloved, there are countless millions of unanswered prayers stacked up on the inside of the gates of hell. There are multitudes from our own generation who are begging and pleading with God to send special messengers to persuade you to trust Christ.

Even this morning, if someone could speak to you they would say, “Trust Christ now. Do not come to this horrendous place.”

Flee from the wrath to come. Luke 3:7 Behold now is the accepted time, etc. 2 Corinthians 6:2.

The Story of Felix (Acts 24:24-26)

Felix was infamous for his profligate personal life.

Paul spoke to him of righteousness—self-control and coming judgment. In speaking of these things Paul was hitting the center of the target. The Spirits work Sin—Righteousness—Judgment.

Felix was known for his unrighteous rule. His total lack of self-control in his personal life. In the light of these things Paul confronted him with the fact that God would hold him accountable at the coming judgment.

As Felix listened he was troubled, terrified, but he did not trust the Savior. He trembled in fear as the Spirit convicted him.

Despite the privilege of listening to the most gifted evangelist of his day, he deferred making a decision for Christ. Instead he procrastinated—“Go thy way for this time” etc.

He put off the great question of his souls eternal salvation to a convenient season, and lost his soul in the process. There are many souls in hell today who did the same thing.

My dear friend is this how you have acted until this present time. Are you waiting for that convenient season?

2 Corinthians 6:2

“Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.”

Proverbs 27:1

“Boast not thyself of tomorrow” etc.

Hebrews 2:3

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.”

Proverbs 29:1

He that being often reproved, hardeneth his heart, shall suddenly be cut off and that without remedy.

Matthew and Luke 3:7

Flee from the wrath to come.

Jeremiah 8:20

The harvest is past, the summer is ended and I'm not saved.

*Almost persuaded now to believe
Almost persuaded Christ to believe
Seems now some soul to say
Go Spirit go Thy way
Some more convenient day
On Thee I'll call.*

*Almost persuaded, come, come today;
Almost persuaded, turn not away:
Jesus invites you here
Angels are lingering near
Prayers rise from hearts so dear
O, wanderer come.*

*Almost persuaded, harvest is past.
Almost persuaded, doom comes at last
Almost cannot avail
Almost is but to fail
Sad, sad the bitter wail
Almost but lost.*



To God be the glory.