

Fifteen

Radio Sermons



by

BILLY ORTEN

Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

and

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

Wesson, Mississippi

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

Dedication

We wish to dedicate this little book of sermons to Mrs. T. E. Smith (grandmother of M. L. S.), and Mrs. Fred Orten (mother of Billy Orten) whose close walk with God in life has inspired us to preach the Gospel and live for Christ.

INTRODUCTION

We present to the public a collection of fifteen sermons which were delivered over radio station WTTS Bloomington, Indiana, from September 23rd through October 7th, 1951. This work was sponsored by the church of Christ at Harrodsburg, Indiana, while we were engaged in a meeting for the church there.

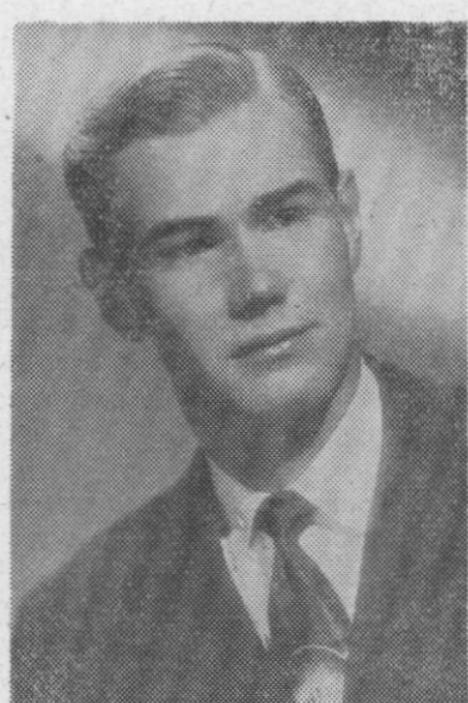
Assisting in this work also were three younger preachers who each have a sermon which was delivered in this series. They are: Ted Warwick, Compton, California; James Orten, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee; and Wayne McKammie, Waco, Texas; who was working with the church there.

We claim very little originality in these sermons. As a preacher once wrote, "Most of what I know I learned from somebody else." But if these sermons or thoughts can help one soul to be drawn a little closer to God and His Way, we shall feel repaid and happy. After you have read your book, pass it on to someone else who might change his course in life and be led to our Blessed Lord who only can save us from sin and from an eternal night of despair. May God bless all who read these pages.

We wish to thank Sister Ray Meridith, who has gone to her reward, for assisting in compiling these Sermons; along with Nancy McLemore, Junie Branch, Betty Nichols, and Brother and Sister Raymond Bray.

BILLY ORTEN,
Lawrenceburg, Tennessee.

M. LYNWOOD SMITH,
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I

A LOVE STORY

BILLY ORTEN

Good morning, friends in radio land. We have a very important text for our lesson this morning. It is a verse of scripture found in John 3:16. This has often been referred to as the golden text of the Bible. We find in John 3 a man named Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night saying, "Good Master, we know thou art a teacher come from God." Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. Jesus answered him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This puzzled Nicodemus. He was thinking only in terms of a natural birth. He saith unto Jesus, "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jesus continues to teach this man. In Verses 14 and 15, we find him saying, "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 eternal life." Now we come to our text, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." In this one verse alone, we have a love story told; in fact, the greatest love story that was ever told. I am sure everyone likes to read love stories, so we are going to study this verse as "A Love Story."

Every love story must have a main character, a principal person. Who is the main character in this love story? The answer is "God." God, who made the world, loved the world, and will judge the world. God, who in the very beginning spoke the world into existence by the power of His Word. God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever more. God, who lives above us and yet dwells among us. He is the principal person in this love story.

There is no excuse for anyone not believing in God. David, the greatest singer of Israel; said in Psalms 19:1, "The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." The flowers tell us there is a God in words of beauty and perfume. The trees, the sun, the moon, and all the works of nature testify of the existence of God. Who can look open-eyed into nature and yet say there is no God? It was so evident to David that there was a God that he said, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalms 14:1). God is very near to us, friends. He is on every side of us. He is in everything we see and everything we touch. We cannot get away from Him. Everywhere we go there are the wonderful works of God all around us. Who gave the lily its beautiful dress? Who taught the mocking bird the beautiful song it sings? Who clothed the grass? The answer is evident, "God." Jesus says, "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass which today is in the field and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe ye, O

ye of little faith." We must believe in God. The matchless Son of God tells us in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent."

But next, let us consider the great love of God spoken of in our text. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God loved and God gave. God's love and love loves to give. Love is as essential to God as soil is for seed. Without love, God could not and would not be God. Forget not, I beg you, that it was love that caused God to give His only begotten Son. Love and giving go hand in hand. Love does not have the grasping hand or the icy heart. Love loves to give. Friends, if we love the Church of Christ, we will want to give it. If we love the institution that Jesus died to purchase, we will not have to be begged to give to it. Parents often make sacrifices for their children but they do not grumble about it, because they love those children. God so loved that He gave His Son. The grand old Apostle Paul said, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). We learn that Christ was with God in Heaven, wherever that place may be, until that night almost two thousand years ago when He was born in Bethlehem of Judea. On that night, the angels sang on those Judean Hills; glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men. For about thirty-three years, Jesus lived and moved among men doing His wonderful works. He healed the sick, raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to talk. Finally, the people became envious of Him. They arrested Him, falsely accused Him, and condemned Him to die. He died an accursed death on a tree. That, my friends, is how much God loved you and me. How much do we love the Lord? How much are we willing to give to Him?

But let us now notice the glorious invitation extended in this love story. "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," (John 3:18). What does it mean to believe in Christ? It means the same you would mean if you say you have faith in a certain doctor. To have faith in a doctor, means you will take the remedy he prescribes for you. Just so, to believe in Christ means you will take the remedy He prescribes for you. He is the great physician of the soul, (Matt. 9:12). But that brings up another question; what is Christ's remedy for sin? His remedy is His blood. Paul says in Rom. 5:9, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through Him." The Apostle John confirms this in I John 1:17, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." We contact the blood of Christ in baptism. Jesus shed His blood in His death. We are baptized into His death. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death," (Rom. 6:3). Christ commanded baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized," is a command Jesus gave in Mark 16:16. A praying penitent soul was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins in Acts 22:16. The Jews on Pentecost were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38. To refuse to obey these commands is to refuse to walk by faith. In baptism, we re-enact a picture of Christ's death, where He shed His

blood. The writer of Romans said in Rom. 6:17, 18, "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." The form of doctrine is baptism, which is a form or shadow of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We read again in Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We must obey that form of doctrine, or baptism, to contact the blood of Christ and be made free from sin. Will you accept this glorious invitation Jesus is offering to all?

To conclude our study of this love story, let us notice the precious promise Jesus has given. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, **BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.**" What a precious promise this is indeed. **EVERLASTING LIFE!** Could Jesus have offered us anything more valuable? Could He have promised us a possession more priceless? He could not. Not life for just a day, or a year, or even a million years, but everlasting life. I am sure if Jesus had promised riches, worldly pleasure, or popularity that people would gladly accept Him; but He offers something ten thousand times more valuable and they turn it down. Jesus promised us everlasting life, and when Jesus makes a promise we know He will keep that promise. It is not like the promise a dishonest man makes when he promises to do something and then doesn't do it. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises," (2 Pet. 3:9).

Indeed, this is a beautiful love story. Read it over and over again. It never grows old. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

II

THE WORLD'S ONLY ANSWER

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

Good morning, friends. I am happy to appear on this program this morning in behalf of our risen Savior. Your lesson yesterday by Brother Billy Orten concerning "The World's Greatest Love Story" provokes much study and interest. The thoughts and expressions therein are very beautiful. We want to still think along this same line of thought this morning with the subject, "The World's Only Answer."

We are living in an age of unrest, indecision and doubt, and in an age wherein many problems confront us with no solutions, and where many questions are put forth with no satisfactory answers. But often the reason why we struggle and grope in the dark for answers in life is because we overlook and refuse the world's only answer to many questions, Jesus Christ, our Lord. No life is complete without Him, and no person can be considered "good" and not bow to His mandates. There is a great void in life where the influence of Jesus is not known, or felt. Let us hear that cry of satisfaction from the Apostle Peter in II Peter 1:3, 4, "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises."

Again, we hear Paul in Col. 2:19, "And ye are complete in Him." Also we have in Col. 3:11, the completeness of Christ expressed by Paul in these words, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is ALL, AND IN ALL." A later translation renders it, "He is our everything." And that He truly is. He is our everything and without Him we can do nothing and we are nothing.

The first question which we wish to consider with Christ as its answer is, WHAT MUST I DO WHILE I AM LIVING HERE IN THIS WORLD THAT I MIGHT PLEASE GOD AND LIVE IN GLORY BY AND BY? I am glad that God chose Christ to be our answer for this question. Had He chosen men for our answer we would ever be in trouble finding out what would be the correct answer from man, but since He gave Jesus, we can know what we must do. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life." He is God's answer to man's questions. Heb. 1:1, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Thus we must hear Jesus. He tells us we must believe in Him, John 3:16. He tells us we must repent of our sins, Luke 13:3 "I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." We find from Jesus that we must confess His name before men, Matt. 10:32. And we also learn from Him that we must be baptized for the remission of our sins, Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This is Christ's answer to our question. Any other answer would be an ans-

wer not of God but of men. May we open our hearts and take God's answer to the world's question given through Jesus Christ.

Another question which Christ can answer is: **HOW MAY I FIND TRUE AND LASTING PEACE IN LIFE?** Oh friends hear it, "He is our peace" Eph. 2:14. Paul is here extolling the excellency of Christ when he said these words. Yes, Christ is our peace and without Him there will never and can never be peace in any soul, nation, community, or anything else. It was on the night of His birth when the angels from God serenaded the shepherds on Judah's hillsides with, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and good will toward man." Well might this be said of Him, for the major prophet Isaiah said long before it occurred He would be called "the Prince of Peace." Our Lord demonstrated that principle in His life. Then, when He was about ready to drink the bitter cup of suffering which was handed to Him by Providence, just before he went down into the dismal tomb of death, just before he paid off the world's sin debt which was due, He said unto His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Yes, we see then that the only answer to the world's quest for peace is found in Christ Jesus. All those who reject Him will never know the true peace of God; but those who come to Him and accept Him fully will find Him as their answer for peace. Again let us repeat Paul's words, "He is our peace."

HE IS OUR ANSWER TO OUR QUEST FOR A LASTING HOPE. Jesus can take a hopeless life and plant an unwavering hope therein. He can take a sin battered, world wrecked, and hell-bound soul and re-make it with His Gospel plan and can give hope to the hopeless. In I Tim. 1:1, we read, "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, which is our hope." Again in Col. 1:27, we find these words, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the HOPE OF GLORY." Then all those who have accepted the Gospel plan of Salvation and have received Christ as the answer to a hopeless condition in life can sweetly sing:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

HE IS THE ANSWER TO ALL OUR QUESTIONS CONCERNING AUTHORITY IN RELIGION. Matt. 7:29, "The people were astonished at His doctrine for He spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes" Matt. 28:18, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The fact that so many ways of religion are offered to the world, is good proof that someone has accepted leaders other than Christ as authority in religion. It also proves beyond doubt that many are not pleased with Jesus and His ways. People should be pleased with Jesus, and we must be pleased with Him if we are found pleasing unto the Father, because while Peter, James and John were atop the mount of transfiguration with the Lord and two other persons, God spoke these words, "This is My Beloved Son in whom

I am well pleased hear ye Him." Thus in pleasing God the Father, we must hear the One whom He gave and declared in Him. He was well pleased. Why did God say He was well pleased in Jesus? Because Jesus proved Himself to be an obedient Son. "I do always those things which please my Father," said Jesus. "I come not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Then, if we take the words which Christ brought us from God and allow them to hold sway in matters of religion, in worship, in conversation and in everything else pertaining unto life and godliness, we can really feel that Christ then is our answer as religious authority.

Yes, as Paul would say unto us, "Christ is our all and all," or "He is our everything." No problem is too great for His influence to lighten, for someone has said while He was here He never met a storm that He didn't calm it, He never met a funeral procession that He didn't break up, He never went to a grave that He didn't raise the dead, He never went to a sick room that He didn't heal the afflicted. The blind went away with new sight, the crippled went away with healed limbs, the deaf were given keen hearing, and the poor was fed and had the Gospel preached unto them and their cares and burdens made lighter.

Then when life with all its folly has faded away and the night of death is breaking and the trumpet of God is sounding loudly in the distance and the call comes to stand before "Him that sitteth on the throne," then, what will our answer be? A speechless fear shall grasp those who have gone through life never allowing Jesus to come into their lives and become the solution to their problems and answer to their questions. A picture is seen of this in the man whom the Lord mentioned being at the wedding feast without a wedding garment on, and when asked about the matter he was speechless. Let us not go to Judgment speechless. But after accepting Christ and heeding His word, Christ will then be our answer.

III.

IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME!

BILLY ORTEN

Good Morning, Friends: We are thankful for this opportunity to talk to you about our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. Our text is found in John 15:22 where John records this statement of our Lord, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin." Let us consider the question that is suggested by this statement of Jesus — "If Christ had not come!" Think of it, what if Christ had not come into this world? What if Jesus had not left His home in glory and come down to this sin-cursed earth; bled and died that we might have life. We can never thank God enough for the gift of His Son.

Have we been guilty of taking Jesus for granted? Many are the blessings which man enjoys because Christ condescended to grace this old earth with His presence. Have we given Him credit for these blessings; or have we merely taken them for granted?

"If I had not come . . ." said Jesus. Consider this question He raised nearly two thousand years ago. What if Jesus had not come? Let us try to imagine a world without Him. Have you ever really tried to imagine the condition of this world without Christ?

Of course, there would be no Christian religion without our Savior; for He is the founder of Christianity. To be a Christian is to believe in, obey, and follow Christ. He is, as Paul puts it, "the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:2). Without Christ there would be no church. "Upon this rock I will build my church . . .", was a promise Jesus made to His disciples. (Matt. 16:18) That promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the Lord's church was established. From that day forward the Lord has been adding people to it. The growth of the church astonished those who lived in the first century. It grew by leaps and bounds. On the first day of its existence it brought three thousand souls within its portals, the next day five thousand, and history tells us that within a few weeks forty thousand people had been added to the church. But it did not stop at that. With such men as the Apostles Peter, Paul, and other apostles to herald its message, it pushed its frontiers forward. Within a short time the church had spread to all the civilized world of that day. The followers of Christ preached their faith, lived their faith, and even died for their faith. The sacrifice of Calvary inspired thousands of Christians to suffer martyrdom, rather than prove untrue to their Savior. That church still exists today, and you can be a member of it. To be a member of that church, all you must do is obey the plain, simple teachings of the Word of God. Peter opened the doors of that church on the day of Pentecost. He had the keys of the kingdom. He also had the authority to tell people upon what terms they could be a member of the church because Jesus had given him the keys of the kingdom. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee (speaking to Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall

be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:18-19) So Peter had authority to tell people what to do to enter the church. On the day of Pentecost, after those Jews had asked, "Men and brethren what shall we do", Peter answered and said, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). We notice in Acts 2:41, "They that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." So to become a member of this church, after believing, repenting, confessing Christ; a person must be baptized. But if Christ had not come there would be no church in this world.

If Jesus had not come there would be no remission of sins. The law with its blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Only the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world, could atone for the sins of humanity. Paul in Heb. 10:4 says "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Also in Heb. 9:12 we read from Paul again, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." So there is no remission of sins without Christ. Since we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, if Christ had not come to take away our sins, humanity would stagger beneath the weight of sin and never find relief. There would be no place of rest along the highway of life where weary souls could cast their care upon Him who careth. The course of humanity would be one long downward trudge, toward the eternal night of despair, if Christ had not come.

If the Lord had not come to this earth, we would not have a correct picture of God. We could never have known what God is like if Christ had not come. The mind of man has ever turned toward the heavens in search of his creator. Man has longed to know what God is like. For centuries prophets, poets, and sages asked, "Canst thou not by searching find out God?" But it was not until God gave us a full length portrait of himself in the person of Jesus that we could know very much of the nature of the Deity. Jesus Christ was made in the image of the invisible God, says Paul in Col. 1:15. Since the Son of God came to this world and declared, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," man has access to a proper conception of his Creator.

If Christ had not come, we would not have the gospel. The gospel is God's saving power. Rom. 1:16 Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The gospel is not all of God's power, but it is all of God's power to save a soul. If we are ever saved, it will be by the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must obey that gospel. Paul warns us of the destruction of those who never obey the gospel in 2 Thess. 1:7-8, "Unto you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The gospel requires us to believe on the Lord, Acts 16:31; repent of our sins, Luke 13:3; confess Jesus before men, Matt. 10:32; and be baptized, Mark 16:15-16. These commands must be obeyed if we expect to be saved. Yes, the gospel has lifted many from the slime pits of sin to the glorious heights of Christian living. But if Christ were taken from us we would not have His wonderful gospel.

If Jesus had not come, you and I would have no hope of eternal life. It was He who gave to the world a picture of the other side of death. Until His coming, the hope of life beyond the grave was no more than a faint glimmering ray. Humanity cried: "If a man die, shall he live again?" But man could find no answer. Finally Jesus came, died, lived again, and answered the question that had been in the minds of people. Yes, if men die they shall live again through Christ our Lord. However, this assurance of immortality man could not have, if Christ had not come. Paul says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22).

In closing we turn to the thought of our text: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." The coming of Jesus placed a responsibility upon us. With the opportunity to be saved from sin, there came our responsibility of accepting salvation on the terms of His gospel. With the open door before us, leading out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son, there came upon us the obligation of entering that door.

So we would not, for all earth's wealth, forfeit the duties imposed upon us by Christ's coming. On the contrary, having tried to imagine a world into which He had not come, we thank God that more than nineteen centuries ago, there was born in Bethlehem of Judea a babe, who was Christ, the Lord!

IV

HEAR YE HIM

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

Good Morning Friends. — In the seventeenth chapter of Matthew we find these words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

For a time, this morning, let us consider the thought suggested here, "HEAR YE HIM." This statement was made by Jehovah, the Father, and was directed unto the Apostle Peter who had just made a statement. This was while they were a-top the Mount of Transfiguration, perhaps Mt. Hermon. Here Jesus had brought His three most intimate disciples, Peter, James, and John, the others remaining down in the valley. They realized that the Lord had come to pray, for they had often seen Him do this, but I doubt they knew this was to be such an unusual occasion. It was an outstanding event in the life of these disciples, as well as in the life of the Lord. As we live here in the Christian life we have our Mountain top experiences, or our enjoyable times in life, but beyond every mountain is a valley and we must be able to walk through the valley with Jesus as well as to abide on the mountain top.

While they were on this Mountain, they noticed the Savior was praying. They also noticed that sitting beside Him was Moses, one of the first prophets of the Old Testament Order, and Elias, or John the Baptist, who was the last prophet of the Old Testament Order. In their midst sat Jesus soaring above all the others in greatness and dignity, as the mountain on which they sat soared above the surrounding countryside. They noticed the old robe worn by our Master was shining with such a brightness as they had never seen before. The record says that His face did shine as the sun. Never had they seen the Savior look so wonderful as He then looked. Perhaps it was just the Christ part of Jesus shining out through the vale of flesh, and those two great persons sitting in on the occasion added to its dignity. It was such a sight that Peter was overcome with it. Peter even remembered this instance years later when he wrote his second epistle, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!' And his voice which came from Heaven, we heard when we were with Him in the Holy Mount."

Yes, that was one experience which seemed to linger in the memory of the Apostle Peter. I am sure that those words, "Hear Ye Him," which were addressed to Peter when he wanted to make three tabernacles just because he was happy and did not know what else to say, were words which he never forgot. Those words from the Father were designed to let Peter know that Christ Jesus was not on-par with other people, but that He was above all others, as Paul put it in Col. 1:18, "In all things He should have the preeminence." Peter was to learn that Moses was a great man and so was John the Baptist, but Jesus soared above them all.

Would it not be wonderful this morning if we could get people to understand that Jesus is above all others and that we must just "Hear Him," in all things pertaining to the soul and the after while? Let us for awhile consider some things in which God would say unto us, "Hear Ye Him," — But first, we might ask, "Why should I hear Jesus to the exclusion of other people in religion?" This was answered by the Father when this statement was made. We should hear God's Son because God said of Him "In whom I am well pleased." In other words, God tells earth's people "I want you to lift up your eyes and look upon Jesus only; I want you to put your ears atune to Jesus only; I want you to love Jesus only because I am well pleased in Him." Now there we have it friends, if there are some things to be found in God's word which we consider to be hard sayings, and we are not pleased to do them, let us remember that we had better be careful because we can not leave off the things Jesus would have us do, however trivial they may seem. We must please God because He has said that Jesus is pleasing unto Him. Then, since the things commanded and practiced by Jesus are pleasing unto the Father, they must be pleasing unto us. We must do them as Jesus did. The reason that God, the Father, could feel pleased in Jesus, and could declare that He was pleased in Him is found in John 8:29, where Jesus said, "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." God will be pleased with us, too, if we will do those things which please Him. In order for us to do this, we must HEAR HIM in all things. I think that hearing Him here, has reference to accepting His words; in other words, to do what Jesus said. It is not enough just to hear Jesus' words and then do nothing about them. It was unto such a class that Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say," or again, "Whosoever shall hear these sayings of mine and do them not shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand."

Let us then HEAR HIM — First, as authority in religion. Someone might say, "Why, preacher, don't you think that all people are looking to Jesus as authority in religion?" No, friends, they are not. Most of the people who claim to be following Jesus in religion, are in reality, looking unto someone else as their authority. How do I know this? Because in so many cases, we find that when Jesus commands some things many religious people will boldly affirm that the command of Jesus is not binding upon us, or that it can be ignored or left off, and still Jesus will save us. When these people are pressed to tell where such an idea came from, you will find that their authority has been some creed written by man or some preacher who has gone beyond God's Word. Thus they are accepting someone other than Christ as their authority. Yes, they are not hearing Christ, but they are hearing those of whom the Father knows nothing. It could not be said of them, "They do always those things that please the Father," because they were seeking to please self. Jesus said, "All Power (or authority) is given unto Me both in heaven and in earth." Upon this fact, he gives the commission for the apostles to go forth and to preach the Gospel. The people heard Jesus speak one day and they were amazed because He spoke as one who had authority, and not as the Scribes. Then, back to our text: We know that all authority has been given unto Jesus, and all peoples, kindreds, and tongues must hear Him, because God told Peter, "HEAR YE HIM."

If all people would accept Christ as authority in religion, a great difference would be seen in the world. If everyone would say, "I am taking Christ as my only authority and everything that He does not authorize, I will give up" — what do you suppose would happen?

A. All the churches in the world would be given up except one. More than one does not fill the authority of Jesus. To have more than one will not comply with Paul's word in Eph. 4:4, when he said there is "One Body," and also in I Cor. 12:13 when Paul also said, "For by one Spirit are we all, baptized in ONE BODY." We learn in Eph. 1:22-23 that the Body is the Church; so, all but one church must be given up, if all people would listen to the words of Jesus and accept Him as their authority in religion. We hear Jesus saying in Matt. 15:13, "Every plant which My Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Then in the place of having hundreds of conflicting churches which cannot be found in the authority of God, with names unknown to Christ, there would be just one Church. The one of which Jesus spoke in Matt. 16:18, when He said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

B. There would be also just one way to Heaven. In other words, we mean that all the other ways taught by men would be given up if everyone would decide that, "I am going to do just those things which will please the Father, or I am going to hear no one except Jesus." Yes, this teaching which would allow one man to get down beside his radio and pray through to God, and which allowed another to just come to the mourner's bench and pray through, and that which required some to give up some things in life, and required others to obey some things in the Bible—that doctrine would be given up—that is, if we were just to "HEAR HIM" in matters of religion. We would find that God has a plan for man to follow and He gave it to us by His Son, Jesus Christ. We do not know and we cannot know what God would have us do, except we go to His Word, for there only is the Will of God revealed. There we find just what God would have us do — then when we find what has been commanded, we cannot vary from that and expect to be pleasing unto God nor to be correct in our pursuit of salvation. If we must take what the almanac says for authority in that field; if we take what the standard in mathematics has to say in that field; if we take what all the worldly standards have to say, and feel obligated to accept them, then surely we fall far short of the mark when we question that which has to do with the greatest question of life.

Let us content ourselves with, "A thus saith the Lord." Let us rest our cases upon the Word of God. Let us "HEAR HIM" in all things and be pleased in Him, for after all, He it is who shall be judge on that great and final day of all days when He sits upon His throne in Judgment and the nations of the earth are gathered before Him.

HEAR YE HIM NO. II

BILLY ORTEN

Good Morning Friends. We wish to consider an incident that is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew. After Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain, he was transfigured before them. The Bible says, "His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light. And behold there also appeared Moses and Elias talking with the Lord." The apostle Peter was so overwhelmed with this sight that he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." But God showed His displeasure to that statement by causing a bright cloud to overshadow them and then Jehovah said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM." The disciples fell on their faces and were afraid, but Jesus came over and touched them and said, "Arise and be not afraid." And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man save Jesus only.

It is certainly important that people see Jesus only and hear Jesus only in matters of religion. "Hear ye Him," said the Father. If we hear Jesus, that means He will be our only authority in religion. Jesus, after His resurrection from the tomb said, "All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). That leaves room for no authority but Jesus the Christ. There can be no system, no cooperation, or no unity without a recognition of one authority. One Bible writer describes one of the most critical periods in the history of the Jewish nation by saying, "Every man became a law unto himself." Everyone must accept one authority in religion if the confusion that now exists is to be eliminated. That one authority is Christ. HEAR YE HIM!

{ I ask you to look at the confused condition of the religious world today. What is the trouble? It is because people have failed to recognize the one authority. They have failed to walk by the same rule. Paul says in Phil. 3:16, "Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things."

For some to accept Jesus only as authority in religion, it will mean they must stop accepting their feelings as authority. Many times you hear people say, "I know I was saved." When asked how they knew they were saved, they reply, "Because of the way I felt." "I experienced the most grand and glorious feeling and therefore I know I was saved." Some think that conversion is some mystical, mysterious, better felt than told experience, but friends, it is not. It is true when one thinks he is saved, he feels good. It is fine to feel good, but can we trust our feelings as evidence of salvation? No! Because feelings change. A thing that makes you feel good today may not make you feel good tomorrow. Perhaps you have all heard of the young man who felt like his sweetheart was sweet enough to eat; and after he married her, he felt he should have eaten her. You see, his feeling changed. Our feelings are affected by what we

believe. We may believe something that is absolutely false and yet have the same feeling as if it were true. I call your attention to an example of this found in Gen. 37. It is the story of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's father, Jacob, loved him more than he did the rest of his children; so of course, Joseph's brothers became envious of him. They hated him. Jacob made Joseph a coat of many colors and this made his brothers hate him even more. One day Jacob sent Joseph out to the fields where his brothers were feeding the flock. When his brothers saw him coming, even while he was afar off, they began to conspire against him to slay him. When Joseph came to them they stripped him of his coat of many colors and cast him into a deep pit, intending to leave him there to die. They saw a company of Ishmeelites coming, so they sold Joseph to these Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver.

The Ishmeelites carried Joseph into Egypt. His brothers then killed a kid of the goats and dipped Joseph's coat of many colors in its blood. They carried this coat to Jacob, their father, and said, "This we have found in the fields but we know not what has happened to thy son, Joseph." When Jacob saw that coat covered with blood, he said, "It is my son's coat; and some evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent into pieces." Jacob then rent his clothes, put sack-cloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. Jacob believed this false report, but it produced the same feeling as if it had actually been true. Actually Joseph was not dead; he was faring well down in the land of Egypt, but Jacob believed this false report and mourned for many days. This proves that our feelings are affected by what we believe. I would not want to risk the salvation of my soul in my feelings, because feelings sometimes fool us.

Some are not hearing Jesus only as their authority because they are following the majority. People sometimes say, "I'll follow the majority because the majority is bound to be right." We might ask, "What do you mean by the majority?" Do you mean the majority of people in the world? If you follow the majority of the people in the world, then you will be a heathen. Do you mean the majority in the United States. If so, you will be nothing, because approximately three out of every five people in the United States profess no religion at all. Do you mean the majority in your community? If so, you will most likely have to change your religion everytime you move into a new community. We cannot accept the majority as authority. In Ex. 23:2, Moses says, "Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil." The majority is wrong. Jesus says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate! for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." Let us not be a follower of the large crowds, but let us remember to hear Jesus.

In order for us to hear Jesus as our only authority, we may have to forsake the religion of our ancestors. Sometimes people are heard to say, "I'm going to be what my ancestors were; the religion of my ancestors is good enough for me." We cannot accept the religion of our ancestors as our standard because our ancestors differed. Every person has two parents, four grandparents, eight great, grandparents, sixteen great, great, grandparents, 32 great, great, great, grandparents, and sixty-four

great, great, great, great, grandparents! Each person traced back six generations has sixty-four ancestors. Surely they differed in religion. If we were going to follow our ancestors, which one would we follow? The apostle Paul had to give up the religion of his Fathers. We may have to do that also. Paul tells us that he was following the religion of his Fathers while persecuting the church, but he learned he was wrong, so he changed. He says, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it, and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my Fathers." If the religion of our Fathers is wrong, we must be willing to give it up like Paul. Remember, God said, "HEAR CHRIST!"

Some have as their authority their pastor. "I'm going to follow my pastor," they say, "because he is a smart and pious man, and would not tell me anything that is wrong." Friends, I can find you dozens of men just as smart and as pious as your pastor who will differ with him. No man, be he a pope, priest, pastor, or elder should pose as authority in religion. Any human can make mistakes. It is time for the religious world to stop following men and start following the Lord. Paul says in Gal. 1:8-9, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

The whole truth is, we cannot accept our feelings, the majority, our ancestors, or any other man as authority in religion. Jeremiah says, "Oh Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself, for it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." I insist this morning, that Jesus only must be accepted as authority in religion.

I want to appeal to you with all the earnestness in my body to lay down the doctrines and commandments of men and accept the teachings of Jesus.

My friends, in view of the confused state of the world, in view of the need for a united church to oppose the forces of satan, will you join me in this resolution? "WE WILL HAVE NO CREED BUT CHRIST, NO DISCIPLINE BUT HIS WORD, AND RECOGNIZE AS AUTHORITY JESUS ONLY."

IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?

TED WARWICK

Good Morning, Friends. I wish to speak to you this morning upon the subject, "If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?" Men in every age have had to face this question. God said unto Adam in Gen. 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." In Heb. 9:27 it says, "For it is appointed unto men once to die." In every country, men have hoped to live again, realizing that it is the destination of man that they must die. No matter how high men might have risen in this life, how poor they might be, how religious or how deep in sin they are, they all must come to the border of death. All must drink of that bitter cup of death and pass into the great beyond. Christ, our great leader and teacher, had to bow to the doors of death. In Phil. 2:6,8, the Apostle Paul is speaking of Christ and said, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; even the death of the cross." Yes, Friends, even the Son of God had to die. Job asked this question centuries ago, Job 14:14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job was much concerned about this. We, too, should be concerned about it. It is a known and proven fact that men have died and will die. The question is, "Shall He Live Again?" This is man's greatest and most earnest question of life.

Let us see what the materialists might say on this subject. He might say all there is to man is bone and flesh and blood. They answer the question as to what happens after death by saying, "Nothing happens, we just die and that is all there is to it." Where do we go? They will say, "Nowhere; 'Earth' to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." That is all, that is the end for us." They say the soul is but a function of the brain. My Friends, if that is so, we can stop preaching, practicing and living the Christian life. We will have to stamp upon the Bible, that it is a falsehood. For the entire hope of the Christian life, is the hope of a life beyond the grave. That is why a Christian will sacrifice, endure life's burdens, and do the works of Christ, in order that he might be admitted into a better home after this life. O, what might come of this old sin-cursed world, if such was to be buried into the minds of people during this present age? What if it had been stamped there centuries ago? Friends, we cannot accept the teachings of the materialists for it would contradict the Word of God. It is the teaching of man, and man's wisdom will not stand against God's.

A second answer is that of science, but the lips of science are sealed. Science is organized knowledge, and knowledge is of the things we see, and not those that we cannot. The things that are seen are temporal. In II Cor. 4:18, the Apostle Paul said, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal." Of

the things that are unseen, science knows nothing, and has at present no means of knowing anything beyond the grave. Therefore, the scientist cannot answer our question on this matter; neither can we take their authority, because their knowledge only extends to the grave, or this temporal life. We are not trying to answer the question of what will happen during this present life; but the question is, "Shall we live again beyond the grave?"

We have seen what the materialists and the scientists have said about this question, let us see what the agnostic will say on this matter. He neither denies nor affirms the existence of God. He denies that man knows the final or essential nature of things. He does not say, out and out, that there is no future life, but rather that we cannot know whether there is or not. He says the poor barbarians, weeping over their dead, can answer this question as intelligently and satisfactorily as those of high educational ability. Friends, can we accept these quotations satisfactorily? Can we believe such statements as these? No Friends, we cannot accept this either, "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). It is certain then, if we accept this belief, that we would not have a life beyond the grave, for we are damned already if we doubt.

Hence, we see that we cannot accept the belief of the materialist, the scientist, or the agnostic, but the only authority that we can rely on is the Holy Scriptures written by the Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit. It has been tried and proven down through the ages by man, and nowhere can they find a fault. You cannot find two writers or scriptures that are in contradiction, a prophecy that has or will not come true in this grand and Holy Old Book.

My Friends, let us see what the Word of God will say on this matter pertaining to life after death.

First, let us see what Christ will say on this: "Shall man live again?" We turn back to the Book of John and we find where Jesus was with His Disciples on the evening before His crucifixion. He was addressing them and said, "Little Children, yet a little while I am with you." Yes, Christ was about to be separated from His Disciples by death. Simon Peter said unto Him, "Lord whither goest thou?" Jesus answered him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Yes, Christ was getting ready to leave His Disciples. O, how they wanted to go with Him. They could not understand this parable that He was speaking unto them. They had followed Christ for many months; where was He going that they could not follow Him immediately? The Apostle Peter said unto Him, "Lord, why can not I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Peter, grieved at the prospect of separation, could see no reason why he should not follow, since he was willing to pass through the portal of the grave that he may do so. Still, Peter could not follow now. When Jesus looks and sees how down-hearted they are, He tries to encourage them by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This great answer of Christ tells us that beyond death, there is a land of pure delight. Christ was not going to

leave them homeless always. If Heaven had been of such limited capacity that there was little or no hope that they could follow Him, He would have told them. But there is room and you may follow: Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Christ would not have spoken thus if there was no life after death. This life to come is based entirely upon Jesus Himself, for He said in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection; and the life." John 14:19, "Because I live, ye shall live also," and in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ proved that there was life beyond the grave. In Matt. 27, we find, "and they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: And also when He cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost." It is a proven fact that He died. Now we must prove He arose, in order to prove there is life after death.

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the grave of Jesus, an Angel of the Lord said, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." Yes Christ had arisen from the grave. In Acts, the First Chapter, the writer is speaking of Jesus and said, "And when He had spoken these things, while they (the Apostles) beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." The promise of life beyond the grave is also given to man. When the Apostle Paul was writing to Timothy, he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept faith: hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but all them also that love His appearing." Paul was getting ready to die. But he said there would be a crown of life waiting for him. Paul realized after he had departed this life, there was another life beyond the grave. He said, "Not to me only but all those that love His appearing."

Friends, we have proved as completely as possible in this short time, that there is a life beyond death. Do not you want this eternal abode? In that life there will be no more death, pain, misery or sorrow. Even Jesus, who took our nature upon Him, was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. But there, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. The gate of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. Which means there shall be no night of sin, no night of pain, no night of sorrow and no night of death. "But as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." That is all we know about how the Saints will look. And little do we know of Heaven or hell. But a fuller knowledge of the life to come, both of Heaven and of the place of the lost, would have no practical effect upon our life here. When the rich man in hell desired of Abraham that he should send Lazarus to preach to his five godless brothers, Abraham said: "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

I thank you.

VII

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

WAYNE McKAMMIE

Good-morning, Friends. We come to you, even as Paul, when he said, "I come not with excellency of speech or with enticing words of man's wisdom, but to preach Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1, 4). We find recorded in 2 Tim. 2:15 the words of the Apostle Paul, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The failure to heed this blessed command has been one of the most frequent causes of religious error. The misapplication of scripture which has resulted from an improper division or handling of the Word has caused people to lose respect for the Word of God, and has caused many to trample underfoot His glorious Church and in the end bring the Lord's condemnation upon millions of souls.

Paul spoke of those who would misapply and pervert His gospel and called them false prophets. In Matt. 7:15, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." To obey the Word of God, we must know the Will of God. If we are to understand His Will to fallen man and to Christians, we must be able to properly apply the passages that we read. If we fail in this important matter, we make the Bible a book of confusion and contradiction as some have claimed it to be. All this is avoided if we "handle aright the word of truth." As all should know, the first thirty-nine books of the Bible make up the Old Testament and this was God's Law to the Jews, before Christ died and "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14). We shall not be judged by this old law as we have the perfect law of liberty and the old law was for a former age and another people.

Although this is not our law, we should study it because the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning. We, living under the law of Christ, cannot look to the old law to justify anything we practice or teach. Under this law there was no complete forgiveness of sins, and it could truly be called an imperfect law. Yes, today we have the perfect law, the words which pertain unto all life and godliness. We are living in the Christian Dispensation and we are to obey Christ. Dear Friends, we must obey Christ, if we ever expect to reach the port of immortal splendor. The New Testament is the revelation of God's Will for the people of the world today and by obeying and accepting its conditions, men become children of God in Christ. As His children, we must recognize the divisions of this covenant to properly understand.

The first four Books give unto us, chiefly, the biography of Christ. Here, we see His birth, life, wonderful works, death, and resurrection. John could not have used better words as he said, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). By these

books, faith can be wrought in the hearts of men. As we look further, we see the Book of Acts which could be called the second division. This book, written by Luke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, is a history of the beginning of the Church and of the Acts of the Apostles. Here, men preach the facts of life and works of that lowly Galilean, as recorded in the first division. Thus producing faith in the hearts of men, they prepared them for obedience to the Will of God. What was the Will of God to fallen man? Peter said, in 2 Pet. 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, but in long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." The Lord invites all when He says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Can we not see the boundless love He has for fallen man, as He stands as it were with outstretched arms, pleading "Come"?

He is calling to all through His word. Listen, if you will, to the plan of salvation outlined in God's Word. First, we must believe. Rom| 10:14 says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher?" We see by this that the word must be preached before one can hear and believe. In John 8:24, "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." By searching out and setting in order, as did the preacher of old, we find that "without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe." So friends, we see by this, that faith is very essential, but faith alone cannot save a man because the Lord requested more. The devils believed and trembled, they were not saved; neither will a person be saved today on faith alone. It cannot be done, according to the Word of God. Second, we must repent of our sins. There has to be a reformation of our lives. Luke 13:13, "I tell you nay, except you repent ye shall all likewise perish." Acts 17:30, "The times of this ignorance God winked at but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Next, we see that Christ warned us that if we did not confess His name before men, He would not confess us that in Heaven (Matt. 10:32, 33).

Friends, let us not walk in the ways of those who would have a penitent believer confess that he believes God, for Christ's sake has pardoned his sins. This is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament and cannot be so because his sins have not yet been pardoned. The Bible tells us in Rom. 10:10, "With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." All these steps that we have mentioned are very essential, but still we are not saved because they are unto salvation. We must be baptized for the remission of our sins. In Acts 2:38 the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter, told the men upon that occasion "to repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins."

When one renders obedience to these commands, he is translated from the power or kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son; he is translated from darkness to light. I tell you, Friends, you cannot be saved without it. It is impossible; I did not say it, the Bible says it. There is another pardon found in God's Word for those who go astray into the world and also for those who have lifted the floodgate of innovations and are trampling underfoot the Commandments of the One who

bled and died for them. Listen, Friends and Brethren, instrumental music is not the only addition that has been made to God's Word. May you realize, anyone adding to the items of worship set forth in God's Word brings Rev. 22:18 down upon their heads with all the force of God's wrath, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Dear Friends, I would be afraid of it. Be sure! Take a stand on the Bible, on a "Thus saith the Lord," and practice what cannot be wrong! You are told to come back, repent of those wrongs, confess your error and pray one for another that you might be healed (Jas. 5:16).

The last division of the Book is the Book of Revelation. Here, God unfolds to John the final triumph of right and good. Evil and ungodliness fail and are finally punished under the wrath of God, while good and righteousness will be eternally rewarded. Thus we see that by the proper division of the word, by letting each part fall into its proper place and be used for its proper purpose, we can arrive at an understanding of the Will of God, and that alone will save us.

My prayer this morning is that you, my Friend, will "Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

VIII

THE BIBLE

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

Good Morning: For a time this morning let us consider a thought which has to do with "The Bible". Greatest of all books, is the Bible. No one can be considered educated, regardless to what degree he might ascend, if he is ignorant of the Bible. No one can be considered wise, regardless of the amount of worldly wisdom he may possess, if he rejects the Truths embraced in this Grand Old Book which tells us of the Savior, who at His birth attracted the attention of the world's wisest old men — to the extent that they traveled from afar to worship Him. Still no one may be considered wealthy even though he may abound in the wealth of this earth, if he has not gathered from this storehouse of lasting wealth some possessions. No one is happy, even if he has tasted all the pleasures of life's sparkling cup, unless he has feasted upon the riches of the wisdom of God. He deceives himself who thinks he may go through life in a happy way, ignoring the source of real and lasting happiness. It would remind one of children chasing sunbeams in the woodlands. Their quest is never fully rewarded.

Let us then ask, "What is the Bible?????" Does this appear to be a foolish question? One might think so, when lightly considering the matter, but when we consider the indifference with which the world treats this Blessed Book, we might well ask, "WHAT IS THE BIBLE?" People ignore it, and treat it as if it were some old musty volume or lore which has long since become out dated. Far too often it is allowed to remain covered with dust while the souls of men are just as covered with the condemnation of God. Often hell-bound souls rush head-long into eternity when the Word of God is so "nigh thee". Yes, we might ask, — and in view of this careless condition in life about eternal things, we have a right to ask "WHAT IS THE BIBLE?"

Well, I like to think of the Bible as a letter from God to man. — a letter from God telling us about Himself. In this letter God tells us about ourselves, too. All that we know or will ever know about God in this life, we learn from the Bible. Also, everything that I know about myself, I learn from the Bible. In the Bible we learn that we are human beings and are created in the image of God. Were it not for this wonderful explanation, we would be forced to take the loathsome teaching of those who would refute the creation story of our blessed Bible. All that we need to know about the world and the facts which are important, we find that in the Bible. God has given us an explanation which the passing of the hoary years has never been able to erase, and the critics of all ages have never been able to replace. When we are in doubt about the existence of anything of earth, our wonderings are dispelled by the first four words of the Bible, "In the beginning God". That is the answer. Nine times in the first chapter of this book, we have the words, "And God said let there be —", and the results of this is the wonderful creation which we now have.

Certainly then, the Bible is a letter to man. But since, in this book we are told of man's creation, his fall, the remedy or plan which was all brought about by God's great love — a love which goes deeper than human love can descend, higher than human mind can scale, and broader than man can comprehend — we might call this letter 'not only God's letter to man, but God's love letter. In it we find many wonderful passages bespeaking God's love for lost man. John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." In this we have a three-act drama. God's part who loved us as only a God could, and then proved His love by giving the greatest gift this world ever received. Then, there was Jesus, the Son of God, who played the second part as our Savior — our sacrifice for sins. He paid off the world's sin debt. Well might we sing, "Jesus paid it all", but, let us not forget that second line, "All to Him I owe". That brings us to the last part in the redemption story — man's part: Yes "All to Him I owe" — we learn from our study of the world's love letter that man does have a part to play in this drama. God did His part, Christ did His part and we must do our part — we must "Believe in Him", and that takes care of everything that would be expected of us. This expression signifies that if we will do everything that is expected of us to repay the Lord as best man can, then only can it be said that we "Believe in Him."

Next we might ask "Where, or how did we get our Bible?" Wonderful it is for us to think that while darkness was brooding over the face of the deep and the earth was without form that the Word of God (for that is what the Bible is — Heb. 5:12) was existing — not in the form which we now have, with ink upon paper — but in some form He was existing — (I say He was existing, because the Word of God was Christ) as we learn from John 1:1. John here begins his Gospel with the same three words with which Moses began the Genesis record, "IN THE BEGINNING was the Word and Word was with God, and the Word was God". (Verse 2) "The same was IN THE BEGINNING with God."

What are these wonderful things which John has said? He tells us that at one time, Jesus Christ, who was the Word of God, was in the beginning with God the Father. John tells us in his first chapter that a man was sent from God whose name was John. He came to bear witness of the True Light. Yet John takes care to inform us that John was not that Light, but was just making ready for the coming of that Light. At last John tells of the coming of Christ into the world in this manner, (verse 14) "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Thus we see how the Word of God came into the world. Why was Jesus called "The Light of the World" (John 8:12)? It was because He was the Word of God — that is what the Word of God is. David said in Psa. 119:105 '(Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path". Jesus chose some disciples and trained them and led them into His will. It was not long until we hear Him saying unto them, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). Why did they become the light of the world? The answer is, Jesus had given them the words which the Father had given unto Him (John 17:8) and they had received them; therefore, they, in that sense, became the light of the world, because the Word is the Light. David says, "The entrance of Thy Words giveth light" (Psa 119:

130). Thus when the word from God was in Christ, He was the Light of the world; when He gave them to His disciples, they became the Light of the world also; then when they were commanded to write the promptings of the Holy Spirit, that writing was compiled and it is the Light of the world. When we obey that Word and take into our hearts the Word of God and are influenced by the Spirit thereof, we become the Light of the world also — "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It was in this manner the Bible came into being. We have it and should love it.

Should not some attention be given to the division of the Bible? Yes, for we read in 2 Tim. 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, . . . rightly dividing the word of truth." Just the major division of the Bible is all we shall notice. Unless we agree that the Bible has this division we shall always be confused. We must learn that those who lived under the Old Law were obligated to obey it and those who live under the teaching of Christ are bound unto this New Law. To try to abide by the teachings of both at the same time will bring us into many contradictions — not in the Bible — but in our mis-application of the same. Any time I have a position which makes two scriptures appear contradictory, I must know then that my position is always wrong and I should try again. Paul settles this matter concerning the division of the Bible to all honest hearts in Col. 2:14 when he was commenting on what Jesus did by His death on the cross. He said, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" There we have it. He calls the law "The handwriting of ordinances". He says they were "against us", and also says they were "contrary to us". Now we might ask who was Paul referring to as "us"? He was speaking of himself and all those who had divorced themselves from the Law of Moses and had become Christians. He tells us that the law is against Christians and contrary to Christians. Now it was not against those who lived under its laws — they were bound to obey it; but we are only admonished to accept its examples of admonition and to learn by the mistakes and accomplishments of the people of yore.

Next, we learn that the Book of God has some passages within it which are designed to protect its precepts from being carelessly handled by the profane hands of men. Gal. 1:8, 9 Paul strictly warns against anyone preaching another Gospel. Here he forbids it being done by Apostles (he was one and he said "if I preach any other gospel") or angels — not even an angel could bring to man a plan not found in the Bible, and he condemns any man who would bring anything else. John would say, "he goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ". Then the last solemn warning man received from God was penned by John, as Lord's Day was about past and the vision which God was showing him through that open door in heaven was about ended, and the end of all things were being summed up, he wrote: "For I testify unto to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book".

IX

WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE

JAMES ORTEN

Good morning. The thought I shall present for your consideration is, "Why We Believe the Bible."

When we were children, we read and heard things and believed them, because it never occurred to us to do otherwise. However, since we have become older and more able to look beneath the surface of the things we hear, we do this no more. We believe only those things that have impressed us as to their truthfulness.

There are exceptionally few people in the world that do not have some belief with reference to religion. Their beliefs may be erratic, they may trust in false religions, or they may distrust any form of religious teaching whatsoever; yet, they have beliefs, and those beliefs are based on something. Our religious ideas are no different. It cannot be said of us, that we believe what we believe, just because we believe it. We have reasons for believing what we do, and we think that they are substantial ones.

First of all, we believe the Bible. We are not for a moment defending anything that cannot be backed by a scripture principal. Human creeds we put behind us as worthless, because Jeremiah said it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, and Solomon said the ways that seem right to man bring about death as their end. The Bible that we believe has teachings that are so definite and fixed that they cannot be changed by the adding of one word nor taking one word away. John said, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." The Bible that we believe is that which is given by the inspiration of God, 2 Tim. 3:16. It is sharper than a two edged sword — Heb. 4:12. Paul says it is able to make us wise unto salvation, and David affirms that it is perfect, converts the soul, is sure making even the simple wise. Surely everyone should believe such a book, but such is not the case. Some people do not believe the Bible, and one of the reasons they give is: "The Bible contradicts itself." For years the infidel has hailed the Bible as a "Book of Contradictions." I have never understood how anyone could really believe such a thing, but perhaps they do, for they readily point out what they say are contradictions, and affirm, "We don't believe the Bible for this reason." Now, I am certainly willing to admit that if the Bible is a book of untruths as they say it is, it has no place in our lives, and especially do we have no business practicing it as a religion. But, Friends, the Bible is not like this. Though people for years have turned its pages seeking one, not one single inconsistency has been found. The Bible is a book to make us wonder, with its wonderful teaching, for stories by prophets, priests, kings, and beggars on the same subject can never be arrayed one against another.

There is a reason for this harmony, and it is that God's Word was so perfectly planned and its writing so completely guided by the Holy Spirit, that it is perfect. Paul said in I Cor. the 11th chapter, "For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you," and so it was with the other apostles. Let us notice some Bible harmony on the subject of Faith. In Mark the 11th chapter, Mark quoted Jesus as saying, "Have faith in God." In Acts the 16th chapter Luke said, "That they may receive forgiveness for sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," and Paul said, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith." Did these men disagree? Let us see. Luke said, by faith we're justified, which means purified or sanctified; Paul said we're justified by faith; John says we're born of God if we have faith; and Mark just said have faith. Do they disagree? Not a bit, and such is the teaching on every subject in the Bible.

But again, some people say they do not believe the Bible, because it does not agree with science. You know friends, I have always been interested in science, and thought that as a whole it was a wonderful thing. There is no doubt that it has done much for humanity. It has helped to alleviate the suffering that goes on in the world. It has helped to control disease, and scientific advancements have been the major cause for the constant rise in living conditions down through the years. But the worthiness of science is not even comparable to that of the Bible. I would be ashamed even to compare the truth and wisdom of science to that of God's word. Here is the difference in the two: The study of science is a work of man; the Bible is a work of God, and there is so much difference in the two that man's finite mind cannot even begin to comprehend it all. Listen to Isaiah's explanation of it. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth." If you can comprehend just how much higher the heavens are than the earth, you will know just how much God's ways are above our ways. The distance from earth to heaven has never yet been accurately determined, which is proof again of the weakness of man's wisdom.

But does the Bible actually disagree with science? Not at all. The true discoveries of science are those things which the Lord, himself, has made. Now it is true that there may be some theory which has never been proved that the Bible disagrees with, but such is not really science, they are only as the name suggests, theories, or as Paul calls it in I Tim. 6:20, "science falsely so called."

The greatest reason that people do not believe the Bible is also the simplest, and that is, merely, that they do not want to. Did you ever meet a person who told you that he just didn't want to believe God's book? I am sure you have. Oh, his answer may have been disguised in some excuse such as "the Bible is too hard to obey," but really underneath everything, the only reason he had for not believing the Bible was that he didn't want to. We know that the commands of the Bible are not exactly easy to carry out — in fact, many of them are right the opposite, but what God has asked of us, we cannot refuse, and still expect Him, on the judgment day, to understand and say well done.

If we are like this we put ourselves in the class of which Jesus spoke, when He said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13:15).

Behold the Bible! What a wonderful book it is. It is the only book that can keep abreast with the modern and rapidly changing pace of time, and this is one of the reasons that we believe it. All other books are like a ship firmly anchored in the swiftly flowing stream of time, because each year time goes on and leaves them farther behind and more out of date. But the Bible is not like this. It was old fashioned enough to supply the spiritual needs of man two thousand years ago; but it is modern enough to supply the needs of a generation that has given birth to atomic bombs, jet planes, radar, and other things just as marvelous. Paul said the scriptures were written, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

But another reason that we believe the Bible is that it is inspired of God. What do we mean when we say this? We mean that God had them written, and in them He told us everything we need to know in order to save our soul. Is it possible that God could tell us an untruth? Paul said, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" Let us link Paul's statement of II Tim. 3:15 with this and see what we have. II Tim. 3:15 says, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God," thus we have "God, who cannot lie, gave us the scriptures." How could you disbelieve a book like that? There's not a reason under heaven good enough to keep you from it. Those who disbelieve are cursed, but the promises to the believer are innumerable.

X

PRAYER

BILLY ORTEN

Good Morning, Friends. This morning we are going to discuss a very important subject, "Prayer." Perhaps there is no subject in the Bible that is more important than this one. Perhaps the most neglected of all Christian privileges is that of prayer. Prayer should be and must be a part of every Christian life. The Christian life just cannot be lived without prayer. We cannot live as God wants us to live and as we ought to live, without prayer. Prayer is a means of drawing upon the wisdom and riches of God. Prayer causes God to do things for us that He would not have done if we had not prayed. Prayer moves the hand that rules the universe. I like to think of prayer as being a means of writing a check on our bank account in heaven, and knowing the teller up there will honor that check; and we will receive the benefits from it. Isn't it wonderful to know we can write a check on a bank whose resources are inexhaustible and never will give out? That is exactly what we do when we pray.

Prayer is the mightiest weapon we can find,
Prayer makes us patient, understanding, kind,
Helps us make right decisions, clears the mind,
Prayer changes things.
Sense of God's nearness stirs us when we pray,
Prayer strengthens us for duty day by day,
Transforms our lives, sheds light along the way,
Prayer changes things.

But prayer in the lives of so many people, if it has any place at all in their lives, has become a mere routine. By this I mean, they go to the religious meetings of the Church, sing about three songs and then have prayer. At which time they say a few memorized lines and then go their way to think no more of prayer until they attend another such service. That is just a routine, but it is not that way with the Christian. The Christian enjoys prayer every day. The Christian often prays when there is no one around; when there is no listener but God. Jesus says in Matt. 6:6, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." One of the grandest privileges given to Christians is prayer, but many go through this life and never learn they can call upon God. Hungering and thirsting within their souls because they do not ask His help in prayer. Thus they die spiritually, because they have not learned they can enjoy the blessings and the help of God if they will only ask Him.

A great many people misunderstand prayer and misuse it. It is quite a fad in the religious world for people to talk about "praying their sins away," "praying through," etc.

Some people tell us they were saved by getting down beside their radio and praying while some man was preaching. Others tell us they were saved by praying while they were out in the cornfield, etc.

In many religious services, "altar calls" are extended in which people are invited to come to the altar and pray for their sins to be remitted.

But we have a question we want you to consider with us in the light of God's divine truth. All we know about anything in religion we must learn from the Bible. It is our authority. The question is, "Can the alien sinner pray his sins away?" Let us see if we can find a Bible answer. In general, there are but two classes of people; the Christian, and the sinner, those that are children of God and those that are not, those traveling the broad road to destruction and those traveling the narrow way to life. We have already learned in this lesson that the Christian not only can pray, but he must pray in order to live as God would have him live. God hears and answers the prayers of a Christian. Peter tells us in I Pet. 3:12, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." The question is, "Does God hear and answer an alien sinner's prayer?" We turn to Prov. 28:9, and read from Solomon, "He that turneth his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." The admonition of this is, "God does not hear the prayer of the disobedient." Inspiration records this statement in John 9:31, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will; him he heareth." God hears and answers the prayers of those who do His will, but He does not hear the prayers of the sinner. Jesus says in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say." Here the Master says, Why do you sing, pray, preach, and tell people how much you love Me, and yet do not the things I command you? - John tells us in I John 3:22, "And whatsoever we ask of Him we receive, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." As long as the sinner refuses to obey God's commands, he need not expect his prayers to be answered. Many other scriptures could be quoted on this subject, but these should suffice to prove to anyone that accepts the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, that God does not answer the sinner's prayer.

But is there anything for which the sinner needs to pray? As taught in John 9:31, Matt. 7:21, he needs to become a doer of God's will. What would he need to pray for anyway? Should he pray for light? He needs light in order to be saved, but does he need to pray for it? No! Our spiritual light comes from the Bible. It would be foolish for a person to close his eyes to the sun and pray for God to give him physical light. It is equally as foolish for a person to close his eyes to the Bible, the Word of God, and pray for spiritual light. David says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway." (Ps. 119:105).

Does the sinner need to pray for grace? The salvation of everyone is dependent on the grace of God. Paul tells us we are saved by grace through faith. (Eph. 2:8). But the sinner does not need to pray for grace because God's grace has already been given to everyone. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," says Paul in Titus 2:11. It might be worthy of note that grace alone will not save a person. If grace alone will save a person then everybody in the world will be saved, because the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

Should the sinner pray for faith? He must have faith. Faith is so important that Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Heb. 11:6). Jesus said to a group of Jews: "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," Jno. 8:24. The Christian life begins with

faith and continues by faith. Faith is a pre-requisite of salvation. It is a plainly stipulated command. Paul said to the Phillipian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" Acts 16:31. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews may be called the honor roll of faith. In this chapter, we have recorded some of the achievements of great men of old. The apostle is very careful to tell us they accomplished all these things by faith. If faith was essential then, it is more essential now. But the sinner does not need to pray for faith. Paul says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17). It seems from Paul's statement here, that we obtain faith from a study of God's word. We cannot pray for faith, because we must have faith before we can pray. James says, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven of the wind and tossed," James 1:6.

May the sinner pray for a pure heart? His heart must be purified. Jesus in His great sermon on the Mount said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." But the sinner's heart is not purified by prayer. The apostle Peter in I Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing ye have purified your hearts (souls) in obeying the Truth." The heart is purified by obeying the word of God and not by prayer.

Does the sinner receive the new birth through prayer? In the third chapter of John, a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said, "Master, we know thou art a teacher come from God." Jesus answered him by saying, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." This puzzled this master in Israel, for he thought of it only in terms of a natural birth. He replied to Jesus, "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Except ye be born of water and of the spirit," said Jesus, "Ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, we do not receive the new birth by prayer, but we are born of water and of the spirit. It is not a birth without water, neither is it a birth without the spirit. But it is a birth of water and the spirit. The only place that water plays any part in our salvation is in baptism. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16).

Thus we have learned this morning that prayer is a wonderful privilege given unto the Christian. But prayer is not God's law of pardon to the sinner. Sinners cannot pray their sins away. They must obey the Gospel, be born of water and the spirit to become a child of God. Then, and only then do they have the promise that their prayers will be answered.

If it be argued that the prayers of Cornelius were answered before he was baptized, remember the Bible says, "His prayers went up as a memorial before God," but his sins were not prayed away. The Bible does not say his prayers were answered, but rather they went up as a memorial before God. His sins were not prayed away because the angel commanded Cornelius to send for Peter and he would tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved. (Acts 11:13).

I humbly ask you to consider these thoughts:

XI

PLEASING GOD OR MAN

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

Good-Morning. In order for man to so act in religion that he will merit the approval of God, his actions must be pleasing unto Him. The only way Salvation can be gained is by doing the things which please God; thus only do we prove our faith in Him. It is my idea that God has always tested the faith of man by giving him commands to be obeyed. If man obeys these commands, it is proof that he believes in God. If he does not obey these commandments, he could never make God believe that he has faith in Him; thus God's commandments are His faith test for man. Any time man will trust or believe in God to the extent that he will do all the things which God commands, then only is he living in such a manner that will please God. He must consider that this is God's test for him. God's command for Adam and Eve in the Garden long ago was God's test for them. So long as they obeyed they pleased God, but when they allowed one word to be added unto God's commands, they brought upon them the displeasure of the Father.

It is not prudent for us to question God's ways — wonder why certain things were commanded, or what profit these things would bring. Since God is the Creator and man the creature, since He is the Father and we are the children, since He is the Ruler and we are the subjects — then we must accept the things that God has given without question, and obey them if we expect to please Him. It is true that some of the things given us by God appear foolish from a human viewpoint. Paul accepts this fact when he tells us that God takes the foolish things to confound the-wise. That is where faith does such a wonderful thing.

Now after considering these matters how could we allow man to take the word of God and reason that God gave us something to be guided by but it is left up to man's own wisdom as to how he wishes to serve and obey Him? How can man believe that it does not matter how he serves God providing he is sincere?

Sincerity is an element which is essential in serving God acceptably, but sincerity in anything except that which the Lord has commanded will not avail. I believe if it had been left to man, he would have given something different in every respect from what God gave. So then we must surrender our human ideas, "And bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ", if we would please God. If we allow ourselves to change one thing in God's plan we catch ourselves pleasing someone other than God. God knows man's ways are not his ways, and His thoughts are not man's thoughts — so He gives us His ways and tests us to see if we will please Him or man. Which are you doing this morning, friends?

It is a fine thing if we can please God and at the same time please man; but if we are displeasing God, in any respect in order to please man, let it be anyone in life, we certainly are failing miserably. Here is

a good place to take the advice that the Apostle Paul gave to some brethren of Galatia who had allowed men to pervert the Gospel and introduce their own ideas. Gal. 1:10-12, "For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ". O, how many churches this morning need this instruction! When will people learn that the things which please men are the things upon which God frowns?

Let us apply this rule this morning in some things: First, let us notice what we hear so often concerning church membership. "It doesn't make any difference to which church you belong", or "all churches are right." Now friends, think for a moment. Is this teaching pleasing God or man? The only way it could please God is for it to be in harmony with the teaching of His Word. What does the Word say? In Matt. 16:13 Jesus says, "Upon this rock I will build my church". He does not say "churches", and until this doctrine can be proved true, this must read "CHURCH."

I admit this is a simple argument, but before anyone can prove this to be pleasing unto anyone except man, the teaching in Matt. 16:18 will have to be changed. Again we read in 1 Cor. 12:13, "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." But again let us turn to Eph. 4:4 and here we have the great Christian unities. "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" (verse 5) "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and through all, and in you all." Now friends, Paul says, "There is one body." What is that body? In Eph. 1:22, 23 "And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things unto the CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY". Again in Col. 1:18, "And He is the head of the body, the Church," thus we see the body is the Church, there is one body, therefore there is one Church. Now can we please God when we teach one may be in any church and be saved? Friends, anyone is pleasing man who so teaches, or God's Word misinforms us.

Next, let us consider this thought — Baptism is not essential to Salvation. Does that please God or man? What pleases man? Well it pleases man to seek Salvation without baptism — that is why we hear so much of this get-down-beside-your-radio religion. Fill out a card and send it in or just have faith only. Friends, that is what pleases man, but what pleases God? We must go to the Bible—because we do not know. Jno. 3:5 teaches we must be born again — that is baptism or where else does it fit? Mark 16:16 teaches that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" Acts 22:16 "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins". Then we learn it is baptism that puts us into Christ, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ". Could you get into Christ without baptism? 1 Pet. 3:21 says, "Baptism now saves us". Now what would we have to do to please God? It is strange, yes — dangerously strange, to teach that man can go to Heaven without baptism in view of all that has been said in the Bible in favor of it. Any preacher is pleasing someone besides God when he, regardless of rank or title, preaches salvation without baptism.

Now let us come inside the Church for a moment. This spirit of pleasing men has made its way into many modern day churches of Christ just as it did some of the Galatian churches of Christ long ago. So we ask, when we come to the Lord's Holy Communion Service, cannot we please God in just any procedure — just so we have the right spirit? Erring Brother, you act strangely here; you who condemn the sectarians for making such arguments for the plurality of churches. I repeat the statement I made at the outset of the lesson, "Sincerity is an essential element in worshipping God, but it alone will not get the job done." God must, and is going to be pleased in His worship, if he accepts it. Long ago Christ told the women at the well that "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." I admit the right spirit must prevail in our worship and in our hearts, but I insist and demand that the other element mentioned in this verse is also equally as essential, and that it is necessary if we must worship Him in Truth. Pilate asked Jesus what is Truth? That is a good question and Jesus answered it, "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy Word is Truth." Then our worship must consist of the teachings of God's Word—even if it is in the churches of Christ.

Is more than one cup in the communion pleasing unto God or man? Well, first I will say it is pleasing unto man — because more of them have it than will take the one. Brethren will tear up churches in order to have more than one cup — brethren will disrupt the tranquility of the brotherhood in order to have individual cups in the communion service. Now we know it pleases men, but that is all right if it pleases the Lord also. But I always believed that Jesus knew what he wanted, and I believe He knew what the Father wanted while He was here and did just what would please Him. If that be true, read Matt. 26:27; Mk. 14:23; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:25; 1 Cor. 11:26; 1 Cor. 11:27; 1 Cor. 11:28 and see if you find more than one cup mentioned. If you do not, and you use them are you pleasing God and Christ? Friends and brethren, just as surely as our Lord did what pleased the Father when He gave unto them ONE CUP and they drank of it, just that sure you are pleasing men when you have more than one. I cannot find where the Lord changed His Holy Mind any after that time. I do find when He was instructing Paul concerning the Corinthian Church, He made Paul speak of this thing in the same number which the Gospel writers spoke of it, and I know that pleased the Father. God said of Christ, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". Why was God well pleased in Christ? Because Christ obeyed Him in all things; "I do always those things which please the Father." If we are going to embrace religion at all, let us take that which is real. Let us make the sacrifice and say with Peter in Acts 4:19 "Whether it is right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Again in Acts 5:29 "We ought to obey God rather than man." Even on the fateful night of all nights in the Garden, praying alone while no human eyes were looking and no human ears were listening, while the world's sins were heavily weighing upon Jesus, He could still say "Thy will be done"—"Have thine own way Lord, have thine own way—Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me, After Thy will, while I am waiting — yielded and still." Thank you.

XII

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Matt. 16:13-8

BILLY ORTEN

Good Morning Friends in radio-land. We have for consideration a topic this morning that should be of intense interest to all God-loving and God-fearing people. Our subject is, "The Church That Jesus Built." For our text we read verse eighteen of the sixteenth division of Matthew. Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

There are two reasons why I like to preach about the church. One is because it is the grandest and most glorious institution in this old world. There is not another like it. Another reason is because the majority of people do not understand the Church of Christ. They look at the Church of Christ as just another denomination, and they think we are so egotistical as to say our denomination is better than theirs. If we can get people to understand the Church of Christ, perhaps they will not be so prejudiced toward it. The Church is not a denomination, for denominations are unknown to the Bible. They are those plants the Heavenly Father hath not planted and shall be rooted up.

It is our aim in this lesson to give you reasons why we believe you ought to be a member of the Church of Christ. It would be foolish for me to ask you to become a member of the Church of Christ unless I could give you Bible reasons for doing so. I would not say anyone to become a member of the Church just in order that we might increase our numbers and in doing so outstrip some other religious institution in town.

I do not believe any sensible person will contradict me when I say the church that Jesus built is the Church of Christ. He said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." He did not say, "Upon this rock I will build John Calvin, John Wesley, John Smith, or any other John's Church, but upon this rock I will build MY Church." If I say Jesus just built one Church, do I make a mistake? I believe not, since He said, "I will build my Church," and not Churches. In order for anyone to prove by the Bible that Jesus built more than one church, they will have to make this read: "Upon this rock I will build my churches." Now since the church Jesus built is the Church of Christ and since He built but one, why do not all people want to be a member of that Church?

But says one, "Is it not true that the Church you are a member of, and call the Church of Christ, is actually the Campbellite Church and was founded by Alexander Campbell." No! That slanders Alexander Campbell. Campbell did not build a Church; he only organized local congregations. He was one of the first to advocate a back to the Bible. However, he had as much right to start a Church as John Calvin or John Wesley did. I am not a member of a Campbellite Church; I am a member of the Church of Christ. This institution is sometimes nicknamed the Campbellite Church because of religious prejudice.

Some historians have referred to this institution as the Christian Church, but it was never called that by inspiration. Individually, we are Christians, but collectively we are the Church of Christ. Paul says, "The Churches of Christ salute you." (Rom. 16:16).

It might be worthwhile for us to notice the phrase "upon this rock." What did our Lord mean by that phrase? What was the rock on which the Church was to be built? Peter had just finished confessing Jesus to be the Christ, the son of God; Jesus then said upon this rock I will build my Church. It follows then that the rock was the truth that Peter had confessed, the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. The Church is built on Christ and He is the foundation. In other words, everywhere Jesus is declared to be the Son of God there the Church is to be built. To preach Christ is to lay the Foundation of the Church. The writer of the Corinthian letter tells us in I Cor. 3:10-11, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon, for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." Other institutions may rise up in this world and be great for a while but they must sooner or later fall. But not the Church of Christ, for it is built on a sure foundation, the Rock of Ages. It is not built on Peter, as some insist, for Peter denies this in I Pet. 2:6-7, "Wherefore it is contained in the scriptures, Behold I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is become the head of the corner."

But the question arises, "How may we become members of the Church Jesus built?" First, let me say, "You do not join it." It is quite a fad to hear people talk about "getting saved," and then "joining the Church." A big evangelist will come into town and great numbers say they have been converted, become children of God, and after the preacher leaves they will join the Church of their choice. Friends, you may join some denomination but you can not join the Lord's Church. Elders cannot vote you into it or kick you out of it. The Lord receives people into it and He will do the gathering out. He received 3,000 into it on the day of Pentecost; "And they that gladly received His word were baptized and the same day there was added unto them 3,000 souls." (Acts 2:41). "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47).

Jesus tells us how to become a member of this Church or Kingdom in John, the third chapter. In a conversation one night with Nicodemus, a master in Israel, Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." This statement is plain and needs no explaining. We must be born again to enter the Kingdom of Christ. Jesus explains this new birth in the fifth verse of the same chapter: "Except a man be born of the water and the spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." So the new birth is a birth of water and the spirit. There is no question about what Jesus meant when He said "Spirit," but there is quite a bit of controversy over what he meant by water: I maintain He meant just what He said, "Water." Of course, the only place water has any part in our salvation is in baptism. It is strange that people can understand what the Lord meant when He said, "Spirit," but not be able to

understand what He meant by "Water;" unless they are just trying to get around that one command of our Lord's that so many despise, "Baptism." First the seed, which is the word of God, is sown in the hearts of men and women. It takes root and begins to grow. There is a faint beginning of life. It continues to grow until this person repents of his sins, confesses Christ, and is baptized. How was he born again? By water and the spirit.

But I know someone is ready to say we are born again by faith only. Of course they quote I John 5:1 to prove it. Here the apostle of love tells us, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." But this does not tell us we are born by faith alone. In connection with this let us read I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth God is born of God, and knoweth God." Does this mean we are born by love alone? No, we are born by faith and love. It takes both. But we read from this same apostle again in I John 2:29, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Now shall we say a person is born again by doing righteousness alone? No, he is born again by faith, love, and doing righteousness. What is righteousness? The Psalmist David says, "All God's Commands are righteousness." Therefore, we must obey God's commands to be born again. What are his commands? Repentance (Luke 13:3), Confession (Matt. 10:32), Baptism (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16). We have learned to become a member of the Church that Jesus built, a person must be born again, by faith, love, and obedience to God's commands.

And last, friends, this church which Jesus built can boast something of which no other institution on earth can boast. Its purchasing price was the blood of Christ. The Apostle Paul in his farewell address to the elders of the Church of Ephesus spoke of it in this manner, "The Church which He purchased with His own blood." Nothing can be of any greater value than the blood of Christ, therefore, since the blood was given for the Church, nothing can be of any greater value than the Church. So if we are to benefit by the blood that stained the old Rugged Cross, we must become members of the Church for which Christ paid His blood.

THE PREVAILING CHURCH

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

In Matt. 16:18 we have these words of our Lord: "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words were spoken unto the Apostle Peter upon the making of his "heaven-sent" confession that Jesus was the Son of God. This statement by Christ has always impressed me as one of the greatest declarations of the Bible. Christ said the gates of hell would not prevail; or prevent His church. I know it did not; though it was assailed in many ways, yet it stands forth in the world as a mighty bulwark. The forces of the devil have been strong and mighty, but not strong enough to prevail against the Lord's great Cause.

The church was a dear thing in the life of our Lord. It was precious unto Him. He was not like many of the so-called religious leaders of our day who claim to bring forth a doctrine which teaches one may be saved outside the church as well as within. This seems to be the common trend in religion today. Great Bible scholars are teaching the people that the church is some sort of something that plays a second part in the life of Christians. This is not so — that is if we accept the law of the Lord as our authority in religion, and that we must do!

We hear the Apostle Paul pleading for the church that Christ built in Eph. 5:25; "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." This should forever cause those to blush for shame who would attempt to lessen the glory of the church of the Lord in the world. This also teaches that Christ had a concern, a deep concern for the church. He had such a deep and lasting love for the church that He was willing to give His life for it. Now to set aside the greatness of the church is to put ourselves within a realm in religion never sanctioned by our Lord. To teach a theory which claims to give salvation for the soul of men without the church, is to advance ideas in life which go beyond the Lord's plan; incurring upon us the curse of 2 John 9 "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God."

Yes, there is an idea in religious thinking which tends to set aside the importance of the Lord's church. I think the blame is to be laid at the feet of the great radio preachers who are contending for a "getting-right-down-beside-your-radio" religion. Then most of them insist that there is no need for the church membership. Is this not another attack that the forces of evil are waging against the Lord's church? After seeing they cannot prevail in other ways, then we are met with those who would give people a false satisfaction outside the true church. Yes, let us beware because as Paul said, "We are not ignorant of his devices." How can people be believers in the Word of God and contend that church membership is not necessary? What would the Bible need to say to impress people with the necessity of being in the Lord's church? We readily agree membership in just any church is not essential, but to contend that one may go to heaven without the Church of Christ is to argue against some of the plainest facts of the entire Bible.

Do people really realize what they are doing when they assert the church is not essential in the salvation plan? Do they not realize they are also reducing the greatness of Jesus Christ who was the builder of that church? Paul tells us that Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it. When we consider the love and concern that Christ had for the church, we know at once it is something very important and something the world could not do without. Jesus did not live here in the world for thirty-three years and deal with things of no importance to our salvation. The purpose of His being here was to save people, and if the Lord thought enough of the church to give Himself for it, it is a very outstanding thing.

Let us for a moment consider just how great the church is. Again we quote Eph. 5:25, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." There Christ put the church on an equal plain with Himself, and when we say there is no need of us being a church member as long as we obey the Lord, we certainly manifest openly we are greatly confused in our Bible study. When we set aside the need for the church, we are seeking to discredit the Lord, or Savior, who built that church. Paul says Christ put the church on the same plan with Himself. He "gave Himself for it!" Now then, the only consistent way to consider this thing is to understand Christ is our Savior. He is our Savior because it was He who saved us. He is the Savior of the Body, and the Body is the church — so, Christ becomes our Savior through the church. This is the only way He can be our Savior.

Again, we find in Acts 20:28 Paul is addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus in these words: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD." Again we see how important the church was considered by Paul. Why is it today we hear preachers preaching the greatness of the blood of Christ? They make it strong that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. They impress upon the people with emphasis that, had Christ's blood not been shed, the world could not have been saved. However, many of these same preachers who preach with such vigor concerning the blood of Christ will not, notice what Paul said was done with that blood. Paul said that Christ PURCHASED THE CHURCH WITH HIS OWN BLOOD." If the blood plays such a great part in our salvation, then the church must play a part with exactly the same degree of greatness, since it was the price which purchased the church. We judge the value of a thing by the price which we pay for it. In this way of thinking, the church is just as important in our salvation as the blood of Christ.

Great efforts have been made to prevail against the Lord's Cause. Some people will not be content to reject the idea of God altogether and deny the existence of a Divine Creator, but will persist in religion of some kind; the force of evil prevails sometimes in getting them to take only a part of God's will. If people could be made to believe there is nothing to the church, and all the world should turn to that, then the Lord's Cause would be defeated. But, the TRUTH will prevail!

Do not those who contend that you should be saved then join the church of their choice know that the same thing that makes one a Christian also makes one a church member? What does it take to make one a Christian? It takes Faith (Heb. 11:6); Repentance (Luke 13:3); Con-

fession of our faith in Christ (Matt 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10), and also Baptism (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, I Pet. 3:21, and others). What does it take to make one a church member? I affirm it takes the same things. No wonder people are so confused in religion when the theologies that are taught try to get around church membership by making it appear there is a difference in becoming a church member and becoming a Christian. Yes, this is another stroke at getting the church and its significance out of the way. When they have so done, that is fertile soil out of which almost any erroneous ideas may spring.

Paul, an Apostle by the will of God, tells us in Eph. 5:23, "Christ is the head of the church; and HE IS THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY." Those who are saved in the end will be saved in the Body or Kingdom of Christ.

Another effort made by the forces opposed to the Lord's church is demoninationalism. Some of those who maintain there must be church membership will contend that those are wrong when they deny the importance of the church. But the trouble with many of them is, they say just any church will do. It makes no difference, though all the churches are different and conflicting in their teaching. Notwithstanding, the Bible still tells us in our text that Jesus purposed to build "a church." He spoke of it in the singular. If it means one every place else in the Bible it means one here. Then Paul also tells us in 1 Cor. 12:13, "For by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body." Paul tells us again in Eph. 4:4, that there is ONE BODY, as well as only one God and one Savior. If some religionist can contend that there are more churches than one in view of the language used, I can with the same manner of reasoning contend that there are more Saviors and Gods. Read the great unities written by Paul in Eph. 4.

One of the greatest evils of demoninationalism is the fact that it causes and maintains division amongst the believers of God. Jesus prayed the night that He stood in the shadow of the Cross, recorded in the 17th chapter of John, that all His disciples be one. Listen to the words of Jesus as He is praying to the Father. Also notice how many times He mentions that it is His will that the people be one. (John 17: 20-23) "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all MAY BE ONE — (Notice Jesus says that all those who believe on Him through the Apostles word, which is the Bible should be one. Then we can all understand the Bible alike if we try). But again: "as thou, Father are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME" — (Listen to that) — Jesus wants the disciples of Christ to all be one that the world would believe that God sent Him. So then division amongst God's people, whether it be through denominationalism or trouble within churches, helps destroy God's greatest demonstration of the divinity of Christ. I say again, we are giving the skeptic the strongest grounds for doubting the truthfulness of Christianity when all Christians do not unite upon the Word of God and "Be one that the World may believe that God did send Christ into the world."

But again, the 22nd verse "And the glory which thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be perfect in One; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me—(Notice, friends, this is such a great point he emphasized it again) and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

THE LOST CHRIST

BILLY ORTEN

We find an interesting story about our Lord's first trip to Jerusalem in Luke 2:40-49. This is a little story that gives an account of a mere incident, and yet I am certain within my own mind that it is recorded by inspiration because there are some lessons in it that may be of practical benefit to those of us who now live. As the story goes, Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Jerusalem each year to attend the feast of the Passover. This year Jesus, being twelve years old, was taken along. When the feast was over and everyone started the homeward journey, Joseph and Mary had supposed Jesus to be in the company. They travelled an entire day's journey without looking for Him. As the sun began to sink and the evening shadows began to lengthen, they started looking for their boy; but to their sorrow He was not in the company. When the mother of Jesus learned her supposition was wrong, and Jesus was not with them, she began to get busy. Where did she go? When she found He was not in their company, she thought, "Surely, He is among our kinsfolk," or "maybe He is with Uncle Sam, Aunt Susan, or cousin Johnny." She searched for her lost boy first among her own crowd; but finding Him not, she went to her kinsfolk, thinking surely He was in that company. But what was the result? She did not find Him there either.

Disappointed in their search for Jesus, the parents decided to go back to Jerusalem. They turned their steps backward, and after three days they found Him. Notice that a little carelessness and neglect caused them to suffer three days of anxiety. But where did they find Him? He is just a lad of course, but they did not find Him in the pool room; no, they did not find Him in the dance hall, nor did they find Him sitting at a card table; or did they find Him in any disrespectful place, but they found Him in the temple where they had left Him. He was talking with the doctors, answering their questions, and astonishing them with His understanding. When they found Him, His mother said, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us; behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Jesus answered, "How is it that ye sought Me, wist ye not that I must be about my father's business."

I do not believe this incident in the boyhood days of the Lord was recorded merely to take up space — far from it. The inspired Bible writers have a way of saying much in the fewest words possible. There are some valuable lessons that may be obtained from studying this story. Notice, the record says, and I think this is typical of a lot of people today, "The parents of Jesus SUPPOSED Him to be in the company." With all due respect to our intelligence, I want to say that I firmly believe, religiously speaking, that the majority of people are walking along the pathway of life on the ground of supposition. Many never stop to investigate to make certain that Jesus is in their company, but they just suppose He is. That is one of the great and fatal mistakes that people

make in matters of religion. In any kind of business deal in which your money is to be paid, you do not carelessly pass along supposing everything is all right. You are more careful, you investigate, you find out beyond the possibility of a doubt that everything is all right before paying your money. But in matters of religion you pass along, taking it for granted; and without investigating to make sure, you presume Christ is in your crowd.

Here was the trouble with the parents of the Savior, they supposed Jesus was with them without investigating to make sure. I am sure almost every denomination on earth today suppose Christ is with them. On what grounds are they marching on to the shores of eternity? The grounds of supposition. They suppose Christ is with them. Have you ever really stopped to investigate? Have you ever made a personal canvass of the crowd you are travelling with to see if Christ is there? You might be disappointed like the parents of Jesus. It would pay us if we are interested in our souls to stop and investigate. Listen, there is too much at stake for us to continue in supposition. Our souls are at stake. As the apostle says in I Thess. 5:21, we need to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

But we notice also the record says, and I think it speaks that which is characteristic of man: "and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance." When they realize they are lost from Christ and He is not in their crowd; their next thought is, "Well surely He is with my kinsfolk," so they join the church of which their parents are members. There are thousands of people that are members of certain religious institutions for no reason other than their parents are members of it. They have never investigated it, but they presume Christ is there because they, like the parents of Jesus, suppose He is among their kinsfolk. Stop and check; Friends, you may be disappointed like Joseph and Mary were. Christ may not be among your kinsfolk. Regardless of how much we love our parents and how good they may be, that is not proof that Christ is among them.

Perhaps you may think it is strange that Jesus was lost by the one who loved him most — his mother. His mother lost Him; not because she failed to love Him or appreciate Him, not because she wasn't interested in Him, not because she was a bad woman; but because of some things that is causing many to be lost from Him today. Carelessness! This good mother could have found out if Jesus was in their midst, as they started out early in the morning, but being engaged in other things and interested in associations, and etc., she failed to look about for Jesus. It was carelessness that caused Him to be lost. Carelessness is a thing that is robbing many of this Christ today. Their carelessness and neglect has allowed them to drift into a state of indifference and unconcern. They neglect reading the Bible, and are careless about attending church services. Many out of Christ realize they ought to obey the gospel, be baptized for the remission of sins; but they keep neglecting and putting it off. They are very careful to conform to "fashions' dictates" and "styles' decrees," but they neglect the more weightier matters of life. The writer of Hebrews in the second chapter says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was

steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him."

Why was the Lord lost? Because his parents through carelessness left Him. Which one did the departing? The Lord did not leave them; they left the Lord. This is true of many of His disciples today. They depart to walk no more with Him. Anytime we become separated from Jesus and He is not with us, it is because we have left Him, for He will never leave us nor forsake us. We through our carelessness, neglect, ignorance, or stubbornness depart from Him many times, but He never forsakes us. Paul tells us Christ will never leave us nor forsake us. (Heb. 13:5) When Jesus commissioned His apostles to go preach the gospel to all nations He said, "And lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." He never forsakes His own. Let me remind you this morning, the religious world has lost Jesus the Christ. WHY? Because they have departed from Him. They have departed from his word. As the Bible says in Rom. 10:3, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness have gone about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They are teaching and practicing some things not authorized by Jesus. Friends, if you have not obeyed the gospel, you are lost from Jesus. If you have not obeyed Him in the command of baptism, you are lost from Him. Brethren in Christ, if you have allowed the commandments and fashions of men to come into the worship of the church and change it, you are lost from Christ; and the only way you can find Him is to go back where you left Him. Many congregations of the church are so much for style, society, and are trying to conform to fashions until the Lord has absolutely been shut out and driven away. Sometimes those who will not go along with these fashions of men are called "ignorant, narrow-minded, old moss-back, etc."

Let us cut loose from these things and go back to Jerusalem where we left Jesus. Let us go back and take up our walk along the pathway of life in daily company and association with Him. With the Bible as our guide and Christ as our leader we must begin to practice and live the principles of old time religion, if we get to Heaven. If we will do that and be faithful until death, God Almighty will save us in that final day. He will call us into joys supreme and mansions sublime in fairer fields and better climes. That is the hope of all the world today.

XV

AND HE SAID "TOMORROW"

Ex. 8:10

M. LYNWOOD SMITH

One of the greatest failures of humanity is neglect. People neglect, or put off things until, oftentimes, it is too late. Some of the sorest regrets we have are about things we put off too long. There is an old saying which goes like this, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today." That is a fine rule to follow in business or in most anything. I think the principal teaching of this statement has to do largely with temporal things, but if it means so much concerning things of this life, how much more is it important for us to apply it to spiritual things? The main reason why we should not put off attending to the things pertaining to our soul until tomorrow, is because we have no promise of tomorrow. This thought is expressed in a statement found in Ex. 8:10, "And He said, 'Tomorrow'." How often do we hear this expression, "Tomorrow, tomorrow." "Wait 'till tomorrow." As I just mentioned, if I could know tomorrow would come and I would be here upon this earth in the vigor of health, then I could afford to wait. But in view of the fact that life is uncertain and death creeps upon us so unaware, then for us to postpone our soul's preparation is just to trifle with our soul. Our life is too easily shattered for us to risk even a day. This thought is solemnly expressed by the Apostle in 1 Pet. 1:24, 25, "For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever."

What is this thing Peter is telling us? He tells us that our life is as delicate as the little grass which comes up in the meadow. What a picture of ourselves! Then the little amount of glory which we might gain here, regardless of how great it is, is only as the little flower which appears upon the grass stalk. How soon this falls away! The important thing is — we never know when the sickle of the silent Reaper will cut us down. Thus, we should not wait until tomorrow. Well might we sing, "As the life of the flower, as a breath or a sigh, so the years that we live as a dream hastens by. True, today we are here, but tomorrow may see just a grave in the vale and a memory of Me." May we not wait until tomorrow to prepare our souls for the eternity, lest tomorrow come and find us numbered with those who are passed beyond the opportunities of life.

James sounds a warning unto those who were living as though there would always be a tomorrow when he said, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain: whereas YE KNOW NOT WHAT shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." There we have the thought of the morning, "For ye know not what shall be on the morrow." It is good that we cannot see our tomorrows before they come. If we

could know the sorrows which are veiled by each tomorrow, we would perhaps despair of life. But God, who always knows what is best and who doeth all things well, fixed it where we must just accept life as it comes and when it comes. The main thing to do is make all the necessary arrangements for eternal life and then be not anxious over things about which we can do nothing.

This thing of waiting until tomorrow to do things which are so important is really against the teaching of the Word of God. We find nowhere in God's Word a hint of encouragement for those who persist in saying, "Tomorrow." Everywhere the Scriptures make allusion to this matter, we find warnings that it must be done today. Listen to these words by the Apostle Paul, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Again, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called today." Again, "While it is said, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." When Jesus likened His kingdom unto a husbandman who went into the market place to hire laborers to work in His vineyard, it should be noted that when each got the invitation to go work, each went to work. You do not find where the Lord ever gave a parable to encourage someone to put off His obedience to the Gospel until a convenient season. Felix, a governor of long ago, is a grim reminder of history that this cannot be done. He, like countless numbers, saw his duty unto God and was brought face to face with a judgment picture, but his answer was "Tomorrow," or "Wait for a more convenient season." So just as surely as God's Word is true, that man went to hell unless he had another chance and took it (and we have no record that he did).

Is it not strange that human beings of earth, who must soon pass from the stage of action and meet a Judgment, will grope along through their darkened path of life with no thought of God? Soon it will matter little as to how much your bank account has been, how popular you have become, or what sort of standing you have in society. Soon the only thing that will matter will be, am I prepared to meet God? All the wealth of earth's millions will be as useless and futile as dry leaves when men of this earth are called to check in for eternity's night. But if that ended it, even that would not be so bad. But let us ever be reminded that after this line has been crossed, all chances and hopes of making any adjustments are over. Then it is Judgment; the Judgment of God by His Son Jesus Christ. Who will be there? Friends, — you and I will be there. The poor and the rich of your town will be there. The good and bad of your county will be there. The influential and the despised will be there. No one will miss this appointment. None will be tardy there, none will neglect it, because this is when God rounds up all human life of this world and settles the score with each of us. How will it fare with you, my friends out in radio land? Are you prepared to make this appointment? Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ as we have preached it to you from morning to morning on this fine radio station?

Have you believed in the Lord with all your heart? (Heb. 11:6). Have you repented of anything and everything that would stand between you and the favor of the Great Judge? (Luke 13:3). Have you confessed the Name of Jesus, the "sweetest name on mortal tongue?" (Matt. 10:32). And then, have you been baptized in water for the remission of your sins? (Mark 16:16). Then do you worship the Lord in spirit and in Truth?

I mean by that, do you do in your worship those things which you can read in the Bible? Do you practice things unauthorized by the Bible? If so, beware — whether you are in the Church of Christ or not, you are treading upon grounds where angels dare not tread. If these things are lacking in your life, what do you hope to gain by waiting for tomorrow? Start today. Acts 17:31, "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He ordained." Matt. 24:44 "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

I think there will be many in hell who really did not plan to go there. They had intentions of waiting for more time, a better opportunity, or for a time when they will be in better financial standing. But Lo, while they tarried, their days were slipping away and before they were aware of it, they reluctantly passed on into another realm, still hoping and waiting for tomorrow. This is a false promise of life's greatest deceiver, the Devil. He would have you believe you still have many years ahead. He will fill your life with pleasures and cares until you will have no time to think of the uncertainty of tomorrow. The rich fool of the New Testament is a good example of this. He was a wealthy farmer who was such a busy man. I am sure he would inform the people he was always busy with his important work. He planted a crop one year and must have given it all the attention any crop would require. Nothing was lacking, because he thought he could not afford to neglect his work. God gave him sunshine and showers and fruitful seasons and countless other blessings; but this did not impress this foolish man of life. Like so many hell-bound sinners this morning, he did not even think where these blessings were coming from. After awhile, harvest time came with a bountiful yield. Old barns were torn down and new ones were built. After the last grain had been garnered and the barns were full, this man relaxed (I am sure it would have been just for awhile) like covetous men do. Then he said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then who shall these things be for which thou hast labored? So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Friends, our parting word is the message of Solomon in Prov. 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

I thank you and good day.