

Hallowed Ground

Fundamentals of the Christian Faith

By

Michael Dean Taylor

**Hallowed Ground:
Fundamentals of the Christian Faith**

ISBN/EAN: 978-1-4303-0318-3

Copyright © 2000 & 2005 Michael Dean Taylor

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission of the author and publisher.

ZUR PUBLISHING
PO Box 26388
Colorado Springs, CO 80936-6388
USA

Retail Sales available by Lulu – www.lulu.com/browse
Published and distributed by Lulu.com

First Edition, December 2006

*“Men will wrangle for religion;
write for it; fight for it; die for it;
anything but live for it.”*
English Clergyman – Caleb C. Colton, 1780-1832

Table of Contents

Forward	7
Introductory	9
Part I: The Concern	11
~ Deceived ~	13
~ My Call ~	15
~ My Conversion ~	18
~ The Question ~	22
~ The Believer ~	27
~ Lust of the Flesh ~	30
~ The Make Believer ~	32
~ Doctrines of Devils ~	36
~ The Fall ~	40
~ The Law ~	43
Part II: The Answer	47
~ The Savior ~	49
~ The God Head ~	52
~ Call & Repentance ~	56
~ Baptism ~	62
~ The Fire ~	65
~ Justification ~	69
~ Sanctification ~	74
~ Holy Spirit Baptism ~	78
~ Fasting, Praise, Prayer, & God's Word ~	86
~ Led by the Spirit ~	92
~ Communion & Foot Washing ~	94
Part III: The Elements	99
~ Grace ~	101
~ Predestination ~	103
~ Love ~	106
~ Liberty ~	108
~ Iniquity ~	110
~ The Commandments ~	115
~ Holy Bible ~	118
Part IV: The Outcome	121
~ The Reward ~	123

Table of Contents (Cont.)

~ The Damned ~	124
~ Backsliding ~	127
~ The Ministry ~	130
~ Divine Healing ~	132
~ All Things Are Possible ~	134
~ Hallowed Ground ~	137
~ A Personal Call ~	138
<i>Bibliography</i>	141

*“Everyone wishes to have truth on his side,
but it is not every one that sincerely wishes
to be on the side of truth.”*

English Theologian – Richard Whately, 1787-1863 (B-3)

Forward

Daniel 12:3

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness
of the firmament; and they that turn many to
righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Before I became a Christian, I always told myself that if I ever gave my life to God, I would want to know Him like the people in the Bible did; so when God called me, I sought him with all of my heart and strength. Since becoming a Christian, I have witnessed many miracles of God, to include multiple Divine healings, and having experienced the power of God in my life, I would like to share my understanding of scripture in the hope of helping others obtain a true relationship with Him.

In preparing this volume, I have worked diligently to relay the faith that was once delivered unto the saints and not from the traditions of men. For I firmly believe that if we want to secure the same powerful spiritual results as the believers in the Bible once achieved, we must use the same spiritual means to attain it. While it is one thing to create a work that is biblically accurate and informative enough to help people, it remains an entirely different matter to reach others with it. In hope of encouraging as many people as possible to read this volume, I have chosen to keep the length of this writing as brief as possible, so it was not created to be comprehensive by any means.

In the spirit of creating a concise work, I have decided not to argue theological concepts or ideas; but rather, I have chosen to utilize sound scriptural support for my inferences that will require the reader to deny God's Word to arrive at any other sound conclusion. Another method

that I used to shorten this writing is to only address information on subjects within the most appropriate category while using minimal repetition. However, I do believe that there can be a drawback from not being exhaustive in each section, for it may be difficult for the reader to fully understand a concept without reading the entire book. Therefore, it is vital for the entire work to be read before an accurate conclusion or understanding can be made on its content.

Although it is important to create a brief work when attempting to reach as many people as possible, I decided to sacrifice the brevity of this writing to a point, so all of the vital Christian doctrinal themes could be addressed. In return for this sacrifice of brevity, I wish to prevent the new believer from being easily deceived.

I have separated this work into four main categories in addition to an introduction. The first section, "*The Concern*," addresses my personal conversion, the backslidden condition of the church, and the fallen state of man. While the second section, "*The Answer*," addresses critical Christian concepts & processes to include the process of the new birth. The third section is titled, "*The Elements*," and it consists of non-processes that are fundamental aspects of Christianity, while the fourth section, "*The Outcome*," discusses the results that should be expected if one sincerely seeks out God versus the consequences of someone not earnestly seeking out salvation.

I hope that this book is a blessing to all who read it. And I would like to mention that if anyone is offended by this work, please keep in mind that this is not my intention, for my only intent in creating this volume is to help others while doing a reasonable service for the Lord. I now pray that the effort put forth in creating this writing was not in vain and that the Lord will use this work to help guide many wayward souls to hallowed ground.

Your Servant in Christ,

Michael Taylor

Introductory

“An almost Christian is one of the most hurtful creatures in the world. He is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He is one of the false prophets of whom our Lord bids us beware, who would persuade men that the way to heaven is really broader than it really is, and thereby enter not into the kingdom of God themselves, and those that are entering in they hinder. These, these are the men who turn the world into a luke-warm Laodicean spirit; who hang out false lights, and so shipwreck unthinking benighted souls in their voyage to the haven where they would be. These are they that are greater enemies of the cross of Christ than infidels themselves; for of an unbeliever everyone will be aware; but an almost Christian, through his subtle hypocrisy, draws away many after him, and therefore must expect to receive the greater damnation.”

Evangelist George Whitefield, 1714-1770 (Bibliography (B) 2)

I have felt lead for some time now to give a scriptural overview on the gospel of Christianity. Almost daily do I testify to others; and after testifying to many people, to include numerous unconverted Christians, I have come to realize that there is a real need for a good concise biblical account on the Christian fundamentals.

I have not done a lot of research on what is already available in print on the fundamentals of Christianity, but by looking at the present condition of the church, I have surmised that either no one has read them or currently there are no good ones available. I do not mean to show disrespect to the churches or the writers, but when I look around and I do not see a church that is anywhere close in

word, in deed, or in power to the church that was described in the Bible book of Acts, I humble myself and say, “*we have missed the mark.*”

Where is the gospel that converts the sinner’s life into a testimony to God instead of a reproach to Christ?

Where is the faith that heals the sick and raises the dead? “For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Cor 4:20).”

There is no place in the scripture that teaches the halfhearted and sin permitting gospel that is taught in many of the churches today.

Where have we, the church, gone wrong? The church has accepted false doctrines on grace and conversion that never allow for the seeker to fully repent before God, so justification by faith and baptism of the Holy Spirit are never realized. Because the church has chosen to neglect the whole of God’s Word and His call for holiness, the Lord has hid His face from the people as the scripture teaches us. I pray this work will help enlighten the reader into the understanding that God will only meet the sincere and believing on Hallowed Ground, not unlike He did with many in the Bible.

If we truly desire to find Christ, let us not settle for the dead and defiled religions of today, but let us get back to the unadulterated word of God that brings power into the church and into the life of the believer. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you... (Acts 1:8).” So if we have one belief that does not line up with the scripture all the way through the Bible, let us throw it out and seek the truth until we find God’s answer. The Lord, wonderful in His mercy and grace, has provided us with a road map to paradise: His Holy Writ. Therefore, let us remain faithful unto God and His word, for “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).”

On this note, may the Lord shake the very foundation of this world until His church awakens from its slumber, and may we pray that the Lord Jesus once again send revival amongst His people.

Part I: The Concern

“Very religious people always shock slightly religious people by their blasphemous attitude to religion; and it was precisely for blasphemy that Jesus was crucified.”

English Philosopher - Robin G. Collingwood, 1889- 1943 (B-3)

1

~ Deceived ~

Titus 3:3

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,
disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,
living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

I have experienced first hand what little fulfillment, true fulfillment, this life has to offer, and how unwise I have been in wasting my precious days on fulfilling its desires. In the past, like most people, I have wasted much of my time satisfying my flesh with personal pleasures and pastimes. If time were money and if the time I spend on the things of this world gives me, or others, absolutely no return in eternity, I have not invested my time wisely for the majority of my life. Whether it was time spent working towards material things or time wasted on pleasures of the world, I have definitely thrown away many precious hours on things such as television, movies, meaningless books, games, sports, hobbies, et cetera.

I have often felt very impassioned by my non-spiritual pursuits in life, even to the point of being immovable as to their importance. Yet I have discovered over the years that when death or some other serious unwanted event intruded into my life, every one of the pursuits that I felt were so important were actually trivial in comparison.

Before I had become a Christian, ever since I could remember, my life had continued in a long string of phases and fads, and as one died out, it was always replaced by another. Occasionally, I would even rediscover an old phase or fad.

When considering these pastimes and pleasures, I discovered that they always seem to change with the stages of our lives, and the few that don't are usually just as meaningless as the ones that do. I know that as soon as I would become interested in some pastime or hobby, a short time later I would grow bored with it. In the pre-school years, I enjoyed GI Joe and other small children past-times, and in elementary school, I liked Cowboys & Indians, Football, and Baseball. In middle school, I started taking an interest in girls and music, and I continued to like Baseball and Football while no longer caring for Cowboys & Indians or GI Joe. And in High School I really liked movies, music, and girls, while my taste for Baseball and Football faded into the background. My next stage was drinking, partying, music, and clubs, until I burned out. It was not until shortly thereafter that I came to realize that there must be more to life, yet I continued from fad to fad and hobby to hobby. Only within recent years have I realized that I was looking for something to fill a void in my life that can only be filled by God. This was the sad story of my search for happiness in life, as with most of us, until I began living my life entirely for the Lord.

I have experienced first hand that nothing in this world can give us true or lasting happiness, and I have also found that it is a big waste of time even attempting to find satisfaction in the carnal pleasures of the world. What makes us happy in our lives today will be stashed away somewhere in our attics or closets tomorrow.

2

~ My Call ~

1 Peter 5:10

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

A little over nine years ago, having already experienced whatever lessons that need be learned by living as a sinner, the Lord called me to be a Christian. And after an initial three months of great joy, for the next five years, I lived my life as a marginal Christian. Like many new Christians, my walk with Christ began in a blaze of glory, but I soon experienced several serious setbacks that changed my life forever.

In those first three months of glory, I lived only for Jesus while finding much happiness in my new way of life. The faith that I had experienced during my early walk with Christ was wonderful, and it was great enough for me to willingly forsake all for Him. My happiness failed to continue however, and about three months after I began my walk with God, I was physically and mentally crushed. Not unlike being struck by a bolt of lightening out of a blue sky, I lost my home, my job, my friends, my health, my heart, my hope, and my entire life as I knew it. So bad was my devastation, I was not even capable of continuing on in my walk with Christ, so I wandered away from God.

The setbacks I experienced eventually brought complacency to my life while I held on to the hope that the price I had paid for my faith was enough for me to have

experienced conversion. Yet when I searched my entire being, I could find nothing divine within me. At that time, if anyone would have examined my life closely enough, they would have concluded that the only difference between me and a complete sinner was that I went to church almost regularly, I didn't curse, and perhaps a few other minor details. I certainly had not found the Christianity that I had read about so often in the Bible. There was no power to my religion, and I could not find in my heart what the scripture told me would be there if I were truly a child of God. So instead of finding the faith and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that the Bible informed me my heart would possess, I found an empty heart - a heart that was void of any real love for others - a heart that was still in love with the world around me.

Over the next several years, my life slowly returned to an endless cycle of self-satisfying and world oriented desires, and I soon became one of those waywardly Christians who falsely claimed to be a follower of Christ. And although for a short period of time I delighted in a foretaste of true Christianity, I came to realize that I had become a horrible Christian, and this realization plunged me into a deep despair.

During these years of lukewarm Christianity, I found myself ashamed to tell others that I was a follower of Christ. And though I did feel blessed that my shame did not originate from an embarrassment in Jesus, I believed that this was nothing to rejoice about since my own state of sinfulness was responsible for my awful condition. At this time in my life, I was convinced that I had been saved; however, this delusion brought me little to no comfort since I felt like a hypocrite when speaking to others about the Lord.

The American journalist W. G. Clark summed up my feelings on this matter rather well, "*The most terrible of lies is not that which is uttered but that which is lived.*" (B3)

My feeling of hypocrisy continually weighted on my heart during this period of my life; and although others would tell me that it is Christ's righteousness and not our

own that is important, I could not, and still cannot, accept that God allows or desires His children to continue to live like the world or to continue in sin, especially since there is no scripture to support it.

3

~ My Conversion ~

Matthew 13:44

...The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

The last four years were an eye opener for me. After the five years of marginal Christianity I experienced, the Lord called me again. This time, however, Christ called me into a deeper understanding of His word and will for my life.

When the Lord bid me the second time, it was not nearly as powerful as the first. In a simple conversation that I had with a friend, I realized that the devil had fooled me into trusting my salvation in false predestination and grace beliefs. While I was willfully wallowing in my fleshly desires and wickedness, I told myself it was fully God's responsibility to change my heart and to deliver me. Yet God's Word informed me to quit sinning and forsake the world, and if I did not, I was damned. The scripture also informed me that only the people who do the Lord's will are saved. So, I had to make a decision between my current beliefs, which had proven to be a failure in my search for Christ, or the Holy Scripture, which condemned me as a sinner.

I decided then to begin trying with all of my heart and strength to apply all of God's Word to my life. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12)." I

began resisting my desire for sin and the things of the world, and I started concentrating fully on Christ. I made a conscious effort to give up my own thoughts and beliefs, and I made the teachings of the Holy Bible my absolute on everything. I began studying God's Word daily, praying many times a day, showing obedience to God's Word, attending church, testifying to others, continuously singing hymns, et cetera. I also resisted feeding many of my physical desires, which proved to be a great help, and the partaking of non-spiritual activities soon became a rarity in my life. With such an out-and-out display of rebellion against the devil and his vices, I was not surprised, based on my previous experience, that it did not take long for Satan to begin fiercely and perceivably attacking me.

Once my open insurrection had begun, many fiery trials began besetting me with the devil even trying to demoralize me by skillfully misusing God's Word. The misuse of the following verse was only one of the numerous ways that Satan antagonized me for the next nine months: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb 6:4-6)."

I wept and cried over this verse since I wholeheartedly believed that I had been saved, yet I had fallen away from God. I cannot begin to tell you how much agony this verse brought to me because I believed if it were true, which I knew it had to be, it meant that I was lost forever - unredeemable - hell bound - forever doomed.

I humbled myself.

And after many tears and much anguish, a most welcome thought entered into my weary mind.

Perhaps I was never saved?

Suddenly, I was re-energized. Suddenly, I had new hope!

Immediately, I renewed my commitment to the Lord

with even more vigor and with all the sincerity of my heart, and I continued to seek Jesus with all of my strength. And even though the devil kept sin and the world continuously in my mind, I forsook Satan's pleasures and everything that his world has to offer. During this time, I realized that I was being tested and tried, but what I did not know then was that the real fire was yet to come. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matt 3:11)."

As I have mentioned, it did not take long for the devil to start his attack again after I began seeking the Lord for the second time. However, unlike the first time when I was attacked by Satan and spiritually ruined, I knew God's Word much better than before, so the devil could not fool me into the same pitfalls I had previously suffered. At first, I found it rather strange that the Lord allowed the devil to attack me, but I now understand that a believer can never be purged of sin without these fiery trials. In addition to every trial that Satan could possibly throw at me in my day-to-day living, he once again began destroying my entire world around me. Everywhere I turned, I was being attacked.

I tried to turn to the church, but when I attempted to attend a church of the religious persuasion that I had been reared in, the pastor would not have me without insult. I turned to my family, but my family thought I was mad and that I should not take my religion so seriously. I turned to my wife hoping to find comfort somewhere in this world and even she turned against me. And if this were not enough, once again, my health began to rapidly deteriorate, and everything in my life that I held dear was once again slipping away from me. Many times during this period, I was confronted with extremely haunting and difficult choices: God or everything in my life that was important to me.

God was testing my faith. I was being tried by fire!

1 Peter 4:12

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial
which is to try you, as though some strange thing
happened unto you:

The Lord knew the idols in my heart, and He would not allow for any of them to remain. I know now that God, and God alone, must possess total preeminence in the soul of man; otherwise, man will remain forever doomed. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matt 13:45-46).”

Months went by of continual turmoil, suffering, and tribulations without end. Yet not once did I waver in my belief, or in my practice, that the Lord must always be preeminent in all things in my life. It was not until seven months had passed since I had seriously set out to follow Christ again that the storm commenced to break, and I could see a ray of hope as my life began to settle down. I soon witnessed almost all of the problems that had plagued me the previous months begin to fade away. I had weathered the storm without compromise - I had made it through the fire! “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:6-7).”

Several months later, I finally realized the desire of my heart. After nine months of grueling trials and tribulations, I met the Lord on Hallowed Ground and experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From that day on, I began living for Jesus out of faith and the desire of my heart and no longer from the dead works of repentance. Had I only known that living for the Lord would be so wonderful, I would not have wasted so many precious years before giving my life to Him.

4

~ The Question ~

1 Peter 1:22-23

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

For years, I never gave any serious thought about becoming a Christian and even less that I needed a Savior. However, in recent years I have discovered, by examining society and my own life, that if there is no God then all of life is vanity. I have come to realize, if there is no God, then we live our entire lives in pursuit of enjoying a few moments of happiness that will always pass away; and if we enjoy material things such as cars, houses, and such, these items will only make us happy until the newness wears off. Over the years, I have also discovered that if there is no God, then even the joy we experience with our families and friends is only temporary; and our loved ones can only make us happy until they die or until we have a serious disagreement with them. The truth of the matter is that we live our lives full of pain, suffering, and work only to taste death and to leave behind a few memories, ideas, or material objects for others who will only experience pain, suffering, work, and death. Does the cycle of vanity never end?

I used to believe that God was unjust, and I would blame Him for creating a world full of pain, suffering, and death. However, I realize now that the world God created

did not possess these terrible flaws, that was Satan's doing. I have even come to realize that all of the pain and suffering I have experienced in my life, God has allowed out of mercy to try and lead me to Him and to divert me from a path that leads to certain destruction. On this thought, the Scottish novelist George Macdonald once wrote, *“How often we look upon God as our last and feeblest resource! We go to him because we have nowhere else to go. And then learn that the storms of life have driven us, not upon the rocks, but into the desired haven.”* (B3)

While I was still living in sin, I once believed another one of Satan's greatest lies: the lie that I was a good person. I never realized that it was only by God's grace that I am not a rapist, murderer, or some other scourge of humanity even more horrendous.

I held the opinion before I was converted, like many others in the world, that I was living a decent life. And if I did die, God would not send me to Hell - after all I wasn't that bad - was I? Oh how deceitful Satan is! I believe almost everyone in the world today believes this identical lie of the devil or one similar to it, and this truly is one of the greatest tragedies of man. I surmise that most people do try to live a good life, as good as they can or know how, but they are just not aware that living a good life is not enough to get them into heaven.

We have all been sold under sin, so we all require a redeemer. The scripture teaches us that, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).”* Because most people do not realize, believe, or truly understand that they must be born-again, the majority of them continue to live in a state that is unacceptable to God. Thus, they are never saved.

A more sizable tragedy than the one just mentioned is the horrible fact that many people believe that they are Christians, but in reality, according to the scripture, they are damned. It saddens me when I reflect that there are so many people that have chosen not to believe all of God's Word, but because they feel they do believe in God and are trusting in Jesus for salvation, they are saved. *“Many will*

say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt 7:22-23).” “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).”

The more I study God’s Word. The more I understand that every one of our beliefs must be in agreement with all of the scripture; otherwise, we are believing a lie. Because most people who profess Christianity have believed some false conversion belief, Satan has tricked them into remaining in the world while they continue to maintain false hopes of salvation. The scripture is abundantly clear that we are justified by faith and saved through grace, yet the scripture is also clear that if we truly believe, our lives will manifest holiness and obedience to God’s Word. “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 Jn 2:3-4).”

I mentioned earlier that at one point in my life I sincerely believed that I had been saved, but to my surprise, I really had not been. I had a powerful faith experience that lead me into willfully giving up or losing everything that was important to me for Christ, and because of this, I was confident that I had been born-again. Before I had been truly converted, I had many manifestations of being born-again, and I believed with all of my heart that I had been. In the early days of my pre-conversion Christian experience, I had desired to tell everyone that I came into contact with of a Jesus who gives us hope, contentment, and joy, and Jesus was my heart’s foremost desire. I attended to my spiritual walk with the Lord continuously, and I even desired with all of my being, every minute of the day, a gospel that would transform me to meet my Maker face-to-face. But when extreme hard times (tests of faith) came, my beliefs were faulty, and I fell away from God and slipped back into many of my old ways - for no dross will pass through

God's fire.

I discovered during my conversion that sin, carnal desires, and false beliefs will not pass through the Lord's fiery trials. And depending on how much we desire to resist God's Holy Spirit and hold onto sin, the world, or the false beliefs that we have in our lives, we may never experience true faith - much less real conversion.

I found after experiencing the new birth that there is much more to Christ's kingdom than I had first realized. I have learned that after conversion takes place, a man will have a more sound scriptural belief and understanding of God's Word, and he will experience a continual presence of the Holy Spirit. A fire will continuously burn inside of his heart for the things of God - a fire that will have removed the desire for the pleasures of the world. A born-again believer will have a fire inside of him that will consume him if he begins to slip away from God or if he starts to unnecessarily partake of the world, which will make it impossible for him to completely fall away. "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jer 20:9)."

God will work miracles in the life of the believer if he has experienced the new birth, and the converted believer will have a blessed assurance that he has been redeemed. While the make-believer fears death and the end of the world, a true believer will longingly embrace the end of this life and the end of this world. God will have also purged all evil and prejudice from the true believer's heart for his fellow man - no matter what his color or religion may be. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen (1 Jn 4:20)? For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Gal 5:14)."

So I now put forth a most difficult question - the most important question that anyone can ever be asked. The question I now pose has inspired more people to lie to

themselves out of pride than perhaps any other question since the beginning of time.

Are you saved?

5

~ The Believer ~

Matthew 7:20

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

I have read about many godly men in history - men that dwarf anyone we have witnessed within the last thirty years. Great men of God like John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and others like these, are no where to be found in our day. What made the lives of these men of God so different from other men?

When studying these men's lives, I found that they were "doers of the word, and not hearers only (James 1:22)," and they were willing to forsake everything for the sole purpose of seeking God's truth and His kingdom. The Lord has a way of raising up such men to destroy the work of man and Satan, and it was these men, and others like them, that God impassioned to stir the hearts of men with the flame of revival.

Another commonality that I found among all of God's great servants is that they always endeavored, with all of their heart, to apply the scripture to their lives. For they all realized that it was critical to live by all of God's Word without adding to it or taking away from it. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (Gal 5:9)." "... 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... (Rev 22:18-19)." The revivals that the

Lord has sent using men like these has shaken the world and has changed it forever. If we reflect on God's great servants and the revivals that followed them, we should conclude without any doubt that many of the people who were involved with these movements were undeniably real men and women of God - real Christians.

What is a real Christian?

A Christian is someone who is a believer on Christ Jesus, His teachings, and His word. A born-again believer is a person who has had a conversion experience that totally transforms him into someone who is no longer interested in sin or in the things of this world that satisfy the flesh, and he is only happy and fulfilled when serving Jesus. A Christian is someone who trusts in Christ Jesus for salvation - someone who believes that man is justified through faith and that salvation is by grace - someone who is obedient to God and His word - and someone who is willing to forsake everything in this life that hinders him in his walk with the Lord.

A true believer has a one track mind with his mind always staying on Christ and away from the world. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt 6:22-24)."

A Christian, the scripture tells us, can also be identified by the character of his spirit, for a believer should have the character of Christ. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25)."

To be a true Christian is to be Christ like. "... Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Rom 8:9)."

I have observed many people that have dogs or other animals make statements while speaking of their pets like, “*this is my baby.*” I do not think the thought ever enters anyone’s mind that the person truly parented the animal because animals look nothing like humans. The same goes for a Christian, for if we are truly a child of God, we will share the character of God. But in today’s Christianity, almost everyone that claims to be a Christian does not share in the likeness of Christ; and in fact, if they did not profess Christ occasionally with their mouth or with the fish on their car, no one would ever conclude that Christ is, in any way, associated with them. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom 8:16).”

In the scripture, we find that God manifests Himself through His children in various ways. The main characteristics that are evident in God’s children are the Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Faith, Patience, Meekness, Humbleness, etc.

6

~ Lust of the Flesh ~

I John 2:15-16

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

What is the love of the world or the lust of the flesh? The love of the world is the love, or the desire, for the things of this world, which were created by man, under the influence of Satan, to distract people from seeking out and serving God. Things of the world can be classified as activities that do not benefit God's kingdom or man in subsisting. Things such as gambling, fictional shows, dancing, sports, secular music, drunkenness, pornography, or any other carnal device that does not honestly further Christ's kingdom can be considered a thing of the world. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom 8:5-8)." On this note, the eighteenth century poet, Nathaniel Cotton, once insightfully wrote, "*So long as lust, whether of the world or the flesh, smells sweet in our nostrils, so long we are loathsome to God.*" (B3)

I have found that there are many things of the world that are not sinful in themselves; however, they are a distraction from God and weaken the spirit. So if the seeker is not extremely mindful, he can find himself living as a servant to his flesh and to his desires while God is placed on a backburner somewhere. The preceding Bible verse should teach us that if we have been converted, we should partake of the spiritual and not the carnal.

There is a serious concern in the world today over the perversions that are gradually corrupting society, and without a doubt, these spiritual cancers are destroying us from within. While I believe these perversions are a major concern to everyone in the world, I believe the most serious of all the problems we now face is the corruption that has infiltrated the church.

There are so many people who profess to be Christians that continue living very similar to the world, but the majority of their lives testify that they are not. “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal 6:14).” These professed Christian’s lives are a reproach to Christ because they continue to live in a lost state while claiming to others that they are Christians. And in turn, this false profession of Christianity deceives sinners and seekers into passing false judgments on Christianity, which misleads many into not fully seeking out their salvation, with some even holding Christianity in contempt.

7

~ The Make Believer ~

Acts 20:29

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

All of my life, I have witnessed people who profess that they are believers on Christ Jesus, yet rarely have I beheld true Christianity. I have studied the scripture and church history in attempt to discover why true Christianity is so difficult to find; and having done this, I have seen the devil's cleverness ever since the fall of man.

One of the devil's lies that prevents many from finding the straight and narrow path is the misunderstanding of what constitutes a Christian. There are many churchgoers today that have told themselves over-and-over again that they are saved while thinking that if they do believe it, and do not doubt it, they will be saved. Many of these people confess and believe that they have been redeemed, yet their lives, when compared to the scripture, testifies that they are not.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 Jn 4:1)." In the church today, there are numerous misconceptions held by the people on what actually makes a person a Christian. There are people who believe that if they attend church, they are Christians and are saved. I like the late Evangelist Billy Sunday's response to people who believe that they are Christians because they go to church, "*Going to church doesn't make*

you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile” (B3).

There are others who feel that because they attend church, profess Christ with their mouth, pray, and even witness an occasional miracle of the Lord, they are saved. The scripture is clear that there would be false believers who believe that they are saved with some even having miracles manifested in their lives, but if they continue in sin, they are damned. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt 7:21-23).”

And there are still others who believe that if they profess Jesus to be their savior, are baptized, go to church three times a week, believe some special doctrine, and try to live by the scripture as much as possible, this ensures them that they are saved. However, the scribes and Pharisees practiced a more devout religion than this and truly thought that they were saved, yet Christ rebuked them. “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20).”

The scripture is very clear that to be saved, “...Ye must be born again (John 3:7).”

I have never actually counted, but I do believe that perhaps greater than ninety percent of the people who claim to be Christians are still living in an unconverted state and are sinners. While greater than ninety percent may sound like a staggering number, all a person would have to do to substantiate this claim is look at the present state of the church in comparison to the true Christian church throughout history. If we are interested in performing such a study, we will only need to take a quick look at the Book of Acts, the Lollards, the Reformation, the Puritans, the Great Awakening, or even the early

Pentecostal period to be convinced that today's church is a cesspool of make-believers. We can also search the scripture since it is not difficult to see that the Christianity of today falls far short of the word of God. And if we are still unconvinced that the majority of the Christian churches of today are unconverted, we can take a poll amongst the sinners to see what they think of church. With one word I can sum up the sinner's thoughts on the majority of the people who profess Christ because I have heard it said too many times: "*Hypocrites!*" "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:15-16)."

What brought the church into such a terrible state, where sinners keep their distance because they are convinced that today's professed Christians are more damned than they are?

The late Evangelist George Whitefield once said, "*The reason why congregations are so dead, is because they have dead men preach to them.*" (B5) I believe Mr. Whitefield was on to something very true, for if the ministers are dead, then how can the people be alive? The preachers are not the only blame, however. I believe the congregations truly desire to be dead, so they may continue to wallow in their sinfulness by fulfilling the lusts of their flesh - tossing out any preacher that speaks out against their perversions. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim 4:3)." With the current state of the church being uninspired and without the true power of the gospel, it should be no mystery that the people have forsaken God and His word.

Where has the church abandoned the scripture? The conversion process and the closely related Christian fundamentals have always been, throughout church history, where the devil has waged his war most furiously. If the sinner does not understand God's Word and how true conversion takes place, it is much more difficult for

the sinner to be converted. And if the sinner is never converted, he remains doomed to hell and often times becomes a make-believer that helps fool others into remaining in an unconverted state after God calls them.

8

~ Doctrines of Devils ~

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

I have discovered over the years, through studying church history and the bible, that Satan uses many tricks to deceive mankind. One such deception that has been successful for the devil comes from his creation of fanaticism and false doctrines within a religious revival, and he uses these deceptions to trick many out of their salvation while discrediting the revival using his false churches and make-believers. The trickery he imposes eventually splits and kills the revival while it leaves behind only an image of the original movement. Over time, the once glorious form of God's work fades into an unrecognizable image of His original handiwork. These perverted images that come forth from God's work are man's religions, for man creates an unscriptural organization with himself at the head of it instead of Christ. History has proven that every movement God has ever begun eventually died and never revived again once it was wrongfully organized. Throughout the years, man has relied on these false images of God's church in attempt to find salvation and often to no avail. True Christianity has always been a personal relationship with Christ, and no joining of a religion, believing of a creed, or trusting in a preacher can ever replace this.

The Reverend George Whitefield once made a comment on man's religion that I would like to quote, *"Father Abraham, whom have you in heaven? Any Episcopalians? No! Any Presbyterians? No! Have you any Independents or Seceders? No! Have you any Methodist? No! No! No! Whom have you there? We don't know those names here! All who are here are Christians."* (B4)

Ever since Cain and Abel, it is evident throughout the scripture and history that there has always been a true and a false church. Cain and Abel were both religious, both worshipped God, and both offered sacrifices to the Lord, but God did not accept Cain's offering because he did not bring it by faith.

To the world, Cain would appear to have brought the better sacrifice because Abel butchered a poor innocent little lamb while Cain brought fruit from the earth. But God required a lamb! "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness (1 Cor 3:19)." God, in his infinite wisdom, wanted man to realize the severity of his sinful actions by requiring him to butcher an undeserving innocent little animal that would symbolize a future sacrifice that was to come: Christ, the Lamb of God. After God revealed that He was pleased with Abel's sacrifice and not with Cain's, Cain the make believer slew Abel the true believer. And ever since that day, the false church out of jealousy and hate has persecuted and killed the true church whenever possible.

All of the apostles of Christ had not even passed away yet when the true believers were already infiltrated by the make-believers who the devil used in attempt to destroy God's work by introducing doctrinal errors and fanaticism. "And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor 11:14-15)." The scripture reveals and rebukes every lie and false doctrine that Satan has ever brought or can bring, and this

is why it is so important not to add to the scripture or take away from it.

A serious concern that exists in the church is the people blindly believing what their preachers and organizations tell them without question; and rarely do the people show a desire to search the scriptures to affirm their beliefs, doctrines, or creeds. I have on many occasions witnessed professed Christians, as well as sinners, argue their beliefs with great intensity without them ever having read or understood the Bible from beginning to end. It deeply saddens me when I reflect on how many good men and women of God gave their lives throughout history that we may have the Holy Scripture in our native language, yet today we would be hard pressed to find someone who has read it from cover to cover. I have come to the conclusion that there are too many people who have determined their beliefs on what sounds good to them based on their experience or understanding without having fully explored, or reasoned out, their beliefs based on the scripture. The seventeenth century English philosopher John Milton made this keen insight on people who profess to believe something that they do not fully understand, “*A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things, only on the authority of others without other reason, then, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes heresy.*” (B3)

The lack of studying of God’s Word by the people has afforded the devil with the easy task of deceiving many into believing false doctrines and creeds while dooming their souls to Hell. Statements like “*we will never fully understand God’s Word and plan,*” or “*if we understood everything then we would not need faith,*” allow many religions to keep the seeker bound to their creeds and dogmas, instead of searching the scripture for the truth and a gospel with answers. God’s Word rejects these poor non-scriptural arguments and others like them, for the belief that we will always be partially blind has cost many their souls. The scripture is abundantly clear, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth... (John 16:13).” God is not the God of the blind or of

the dead, but rather He is the God of the living and of those who can see. “...Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you (Luke 11:9).”

The lack of Bible reading is not the only cause of false doctrines within the church. Most false doctrines that have crept into the church derive from man’s error in studying the scripture. When a man studies God’s Word, his desire to verify his beliefs will drive him to confirm his opinions, and rarely will he use the scripture to deny his erroneous creeds.

Due to man’s questionable methods of studying the scripture, many false doctrines have crept into the Christian religion. One such doctrine allows for church members to style themselves after the world and its perversions, with such imitations in music, dress, lifestyle, entertainment, and attitude, et cetera, being evident throughout most of the so-called Christian world. When genuine holiness and fruits of the spirit can no longer be witnessed in the lives of the church goers, the church is in a serious need of an awakening. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you (2 Cor 6:17).”

9

~ The Fall ~

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

I have addressed briefly, up to this point, some of the concerns that have crept into the church over the years, which should help the seeker to not be as easily deceived by the portion of the establishment that is corrupt. Having examined some of the shortcomings of the church, I would now like to turn to the origin of every man's demise: The Fall.

The scripture teaches us that God, an omnipotent being, created the heavens and the earth including man for His own pleasure, with man having been created with a free will to do as he pleased within reason. In the book of Genesis, Moses tells us that God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and He placed them in a garden called Eden. God then spoke to Adam and Eve, and He told them that they could do anything that they desired, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen 2:17)."

Satan, or Lucifer (a creation of God, the chief fallen angel, having fell by pride - the father of all evil), possessed a serpent to convince Eve to disbelieve God's Word, believe a lie, and partake of the forbidden fruit. Satan was successful. Eve then convinced Adam to sin

also, and because of their sin, they were separated from God. And ever since that day, sin not only separated Adam and Eve from God, but it has also separated the rest of us from Him as well. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities (Isa 64:6-7).” Because nothing defiled or sinful can stand in the presence of God, Adam and Eve were then sent out of the Garden of Eden, and man was plagued with a state of sinfulness, disease, and death; and the rest is history.

What did Adam and Eve’s disobedience consist of? There have been many arguments throughout time on what the actual partaking of the forbidden tree consisted of; however, I believe if we search the scripture, we will find that it is unbelief and selfish desire that leads to disobedience and causes damnation. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).”

So why is it important to speak of Adam’s fall in the garden?

The scripture tells us that Adam’s sin was imputed to all of mankind, and because of his sin, we have all been thrust into a state of wickedness. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation... (Rom 5:18).” For this reason, no matter how morally good anyone’s life is in this world or how many wonderful deeds they may do, they remain damned unless they are saved by God, for all men require a savior according to the Holy Scripture.

Sin has plagued mankind ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, and all sin, death, disease, and suffering that man has experienced will remain with him as long as he continues to live in unbelief. God being merciful made a way for us that we do not have to be burdened with this world or sin any longer; however, before I make mention of God’s provided way for our deliverance, we must first

understand the Law.

10

~ The Law ~

Romans 5:12-13

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

After man had fallen from grace in the Garden of Eden, God chose to bring His will and word to mankind by the Hebrew people, so man could one day be reconciled with Him. The main message God gave to man was that due to Adam's transgression mankind had become wicked and sinful, so man now needed to repent of his evil or suffer the consequences.

The Hebrew prophet Moses was one of God's chosen vessels to bring forth much of His will to man. A large part of the message that Moses brought was God's Law. God justly provided His Law so a recognition of sinfulness could be established, all injustice could be avenged on judgment day, and a method of atonement for sin could be instituted.

The recognition of sinfulness had to be given to man, so man could be held accountable for the evil that he commits. The recognition of iniquity was also given, so man could repent of his sins.

The punishment that God has prescribed in His word was given to man to try and convince him to turn from his wickedness and seek after God. The scripture promises that man will be required to pay a most painful penalty if he does not repent of his iniquities.

As a means of mercy towards man, God provided a method of atonement for sin within His Law, so man does not have to receive further punishment once this life is over. The acceptable method of atonement that God allowed under the Law to appease for man's sin was for man to offer up animal sacrifices for his iniquities. Under the Law, God allowed these sacrifices to be killed and then burned in man's place; and while it is true that for a time the Lord did accept animal sacrifices for sin, these sacrifices were only a symbol of an offering yet to be made. Animal sacrifices are no longer acceptable to God since He came to earth as a man and offered up Himself to pay the penalty for all who believe. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (1 Pet 3:18)."

I believe it is vitally important to stress the point that a violation of God's Law demands that justice, according to God's Law, be served on judgment day; otherwise, God is unjust and a liar. Contrary to what many believe, no matter how much good we do in this world has no bearing what-so-ever on God's justice system; otherwise, Christ died in vain. What this means to mankind is that if even a single violation of God's Law is committed, such as only one lie being told, the violator will be put to death through Hellfire with no exceptions being made outside of receiving a pardon from God. Just as a criminal who violates our earthly laws should not be set free based on their previous good deeds, so it is with God as well.

God, through His word, has instructed us that unless we have an acceptable atonement for our sin we will be damned. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)." Therefore, our only hope to escape certain damnation is for us to receive God's atonement to pardon us for our iniquity; and as our Lord teaches us in the scripture, we can only receive His forgiveness if we are born-again. It is over this crucial point, the born again experience, that most Christians have bickered over throughout the ages, for the born-again experience is the

bottom line difference between a man who is saved and one who is damned.

Part II: The Answer

“God’s way of answering the Christian’s prayer for more patience, experience, hope, and love, often is to put him into the furnace of affliction.”

English Divine – Richard Cecil, 1748-1777

11

~ The Savior ~

Matthew 11:29-30

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek
and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

All throughout God's Word before the time of Christ, the Hebrew writings promised a coming Messiah. The scripture declared that this Messiah would deliver His believing people from their sins and from their earthly enemies. Unbeknownst to the Jew's however, God did not plan for the deliverance of their earthly kingdom until after the time of the Gentiles had been fulfilled, so the Jew's rejected Jesus Christ. The Lord, by design, used this misinterpretation of His word to blind the Hebrews, so salvation could be brought unto all nations. Once all of the gentile nations have heard God's Word, the Lord will once again turn back to the Jews.

The first and foremost foundation of Christianity is the belief that all men require a savior to be delivered from death and destruction, and the Savior that came to deliver us was God Himself in the flesh: The Lord Jesus Christ. God being merciful made a way that we might not be damned and that we may eventually be reunited with Him. Our Father, looking through the window of time, knew that one day He would put on flesh as a man and become the Son of God, so He could overcome the world for his believing children and become a sacrifice for their sin. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a

son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt 1:23).” "...He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (1-Heb 9:26)."

The Lord Jesus came into the world to take away our sins – "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)." And no matter how sinful anyone may be, God's grace is sufficient. So until we breathe our last dying breath, it is the Lord's desire that all men come to Him by faith through repentance. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32)."

The Lord Jesus was sacrificed to pay the penalty of God's Law for our sins, and when He was buried, our sins were buried with Him. When Christ resurrected, He overcame death, Hell, and the grave so that we do not have to experience these things and that we may have hope for a better world to come. The church reformer Martin Luther once wrote, "*In his life, Christ is an example, showing us how to live; in his death, he is a sacrifice, satisfying for our sins; in his resurrection, a conqueror; in his ascension, a king; in his intercession, a high priest.*" (B3)

Contrary to what many believe, the Lord Jesus did not abolish the law, but rather, He fulfilled it. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:18-19)."

As I mentioned earlier, all of mankind has been sentenced to death due to sin; however, the Lord Jesus came to substitute Himself for the believer. Because Jesus did make this sacrifice for our sins, we do not have to follow the Law to be saved, but instead we have to follow Christ to receive His pardon from the penalty of the Law. When the Lord Jesus walked perfectly within the law and gave his life willingly as a perfect man, he purchased back the fallen Adam and all believers who were born into sin because of Adam's transgression. So all are now counted

as righteous if they believe God's Word and that Christ died for their sins. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)."

On judgment day, only the sacrifice of Christ will be accepted for admission into heaven and nothing that we have done in our lives will give us the right to enter into heaven or escape damnation. Yet on judgment day, only those who believed in Christ enough to keep his commandments and live their lives for Him will be pardoned.

When Christ was crucified, He accomplished more than the redemption of our souls, for through His suffering provision was made for all of our spiritual needs. If we humble ourselves, apply the scripture to our lives, and follow Christ, we will experience salvation, joy unspeakable, and peace of mind; and with a little seasoning, nothing will be able to stand in our way that cannot be overcome.

12

~ The God Head ~

Exodus 20:2-3

I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Several years before I became a Christian, I had begun reading the Holy Bible, and when I was about three-quarters of the way through, I was greatly appalled by something I read. I had first read the Old Testament, and no sooner than I had read half of the New Testament, I asked myself, “*Who is this Jesus?*” The entire Old Testament commanded me to worship and follow only one God, and His name was Jehovah. So I threw the Bible down in disgust, and I did not pick it up again for several years.

Ever since God called me, I have discovered many concerns in the practice of Christianity with one of these concerns being the paganism that has been accepted in the church ever since the establishment of the Church of Rome. Besides the obvious worship of graven images – “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, ... (Exod 20:4-5),” the Catholic Church also canonized pagan polytheism into the Godhead, which has tainted Christianity.

The paganism that was introduced into the Godhead is

the belief that Jesus is God, but He is not Jehovah (the Father in the flesh); nor is He the Holy Spirit, but they all make up one god. This belief is called the Trinity, which any good Israelite will condemn as paganism and any good mathematician as error. "...There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else (Isa 45:21-22)."

No matter how bad our math is, if Jesus is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, they are three different and separate beings. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19)." No where in the Bible does it mention a trinity, and the scripture always references God in a singular form: I, He, Him, etc.

Throughout God's Word, the scripture states that there is only one God while the Bible also teaches us that Jesus is God. If Jesus is God, which He must be for God's Word cannot be in error, then Jesus is the Father in the flesh. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6)." And if Jesus is not Jehovah, then we are disobedient to God, and we are pagans for paying Jesus tribute.

The Trinity is just another one of those mysteries we just have to believe by faith, the churches tell us; when in reality, it is ancient Roman paganism dressed up to look like Christianity. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (1 Cor 8:6)." We know that God is a spirit, and man is a flesh being. So we understand that the flesh man of God was indeed the Son of God because all human males, who are of God, are called "sons of God." All flesh bodies have a beginning, even Jesus'; however, Jesus' Spirit was Jehovah Himself.

Jesus' person was created, "but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels... (Heb 2:9)," by God taking a portion of His Spirit from His own bosom and creating a

man from it. “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father (John 16:27-28).”

Jesus, “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature (Col 1:15),” was wholly a man like we are, but when He reached thirty years old and was baptized, the rest of Jehovah went into His own created flesh body to reconcile the world to Himself. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col 2:8-10).”

Jesus had to be tempted and tried to become the judge and mediator for all men’s sin while simultaneously experiencing the world as a man to understand our burdens and pay the price for our transgressions. The scripture is full of verses that leave no doubt as to the Divine identity of Jesus with one such verse being, “Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, ... (John 14:8-9)?”

The Son of God, being the Father in the flesh, is not a new concept to the Jews, who have always believed that the coming Messiah, the Son of God, would be Jehovah in the flesh: Emmanuel. And this is why the high priest rent (tore) his clothes when Jesus confirmed that he was the Son of God (Matt 14:62) because Jesus being the Son of God meant that Jesus was the God of Israel - the Father in the flesh, which was blasphemy to the Jews.

Move over Jehovah, if Jesus is not Jehovah, then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said you were a liar, for “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).” But Jehovah tells us through Isaiah that, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there

be after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and beside me there is no saviour (Isa 43:10-11)."

Do not be confused that Jesus, a man, and Jehovah, a Spirit, are the same person - Mystery of the Godhead: Jesus being the flesh manifestation of Jehovah with Jehovah Himself dwelling in a man's body reconciling the world to Himself. "God is one," not three. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (I Jn 5:7)."

Mark 12:29

And Jesus answered him,
The first of all the commandments is,
Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord:

Why is the God head so important? As the verse above states, the first and foremost commandment of the Lord is for us to believe in a single God. The very foundation of Christianity is tied into the Lord Jesus' true identity; because if we believe in a triune God, we are pagans practicing polytheism and may be punished - for God will not share His glory with any other. "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images (Isa 42:8)."

The fact that Jesus is the Father in the flesh may come as a surprise to some, yet it is an undeniable scriptural fact. And if it is not true, then all Christians are guilty of violating the scripture for worshipping a God other than Jehovah, and therefore all Christians are damned. "Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me (Hosea 13:4)."

13

~ Call & Repentance ~

Revelation 3:19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:
be zealous therefore, and repent.

Before anyone can be saved, they must realize that they are lost; before anyone can accept a savior, they must be convinced that they need one.

The first order of God in the conversion of man is for God to convict a person's heart to make him recognize that he is lost and sinful. It is not until God gives this conviction that the sinner begins to feel sinful and an impending doom, which drives man to seek God through repentance. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments... (Ps 111:10)."

The Lord, "...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9)," at some time in a person's life, will call the sinner, and without this call, the sinner would continue to wallow in his demise and never seek the Lord. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:44)."

What does the scripture mean by "repent?"

The English philosopher John Locke once accurately described true repentance like this, "*Repentance is a hearty sorrow for our past misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and endeavor, to the utmost of our power, to conform all our actions to the law of God. It does not*

consist in one single act of sorrow, but in doing works meet for repentance; in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ for the remainder of our lives.” (B3)

After God calls the sinner, there are three possibilities: the sinner can disbelieve, not heed the call, and remain a sinner; the sinner can heed the call but not believe unto salvation and become a make-believer; or the sinner can sincerely and fully repent and continue to believe unto salvation. “For many are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14).”

Probably the biggest concern that exists in the church today is the false predestination, faith, and grace beliefs that never allow for the seeker to truly repent and be justified by faith before God, which is mandatory for a person to be saved. Many of the churches today have everyone believing that the only thing the sinner has to do to be saved is to believe on Jesus and trust in His wonderful grace; but they ignore the first and foremost message that the Lord and His Apostles taught, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ... (Acts 3:19).” (See Acts 8: 9-23 - This passage is just one of many that shows repentance of the heart, mind, and life is required for salvation and not just an idle faith).

One common element between all of the major revivals that the Lord has ever sent was the call for man to repent. The true church has always preached that a man must repent and purge his heart from his wickedness, but today we would be lucky to find anyone that teaches the seeker the sound scriptural doctrine of repentance. No one will ever be saved who waits around for the Lord to change their heart and force them to repent. American Clergyman William Nevins once had this to say on repentance, “*He that waits for repentance, waits for that which cannot be had as long as it is waited for. It is absurd for a man to wait for that which he himself has to do.*” (B3)

Satan has the majority of the professed Christian world deceived into believing that if we make ourselves do anything other than believe, we are living by the Law or

works, which totally denies the scripture. For a man to say that he is a believer and then deny God's Word commanding him to repent and be obedient, proves he is an unbeliever. There are many people who say, "*I believe this*" or "*I believe that,*" so I am saved. However, if our beliefs do not transform us into the image of Christ like the men and women of God mentioned in the Bible, we are lost.

One of the key doctrinal errors that brings forth a non-repentant church derives from a distorted view of a fundamental belief within the Christian faith: Imputed Righteousness. Imputed righteousness is the belief that when a man believes on Christ Jesus and is converted, the Lord's righteousness is imputed to the believer. Because of imputed righteousness, many people downplay the importance of the believer's repentance and of the applying of the scripture to a person's life, which leads many into falling short when their faith is tested. All true believers trust in the imputed righteousness of Christ and not their own; however, all true believers also believe God's Word commanding them to repent. Anselm of Laon, otherwise known as Saint Anselm, once stated, "*God hath promised pardon to him that repenteth, but he hath not promised repentance to him that sinneth.*" (B3)

Many modern religious groups hold the view that they can wait around for God to change their heart instead of fleeing from sin. One reason that these religious groups teach this is because they believe that if they are predestinated, God will ensure that they are saved, which is just another one of Satan's lies to trick man out of his salvation. John the Baptist was not confused by the Israelis false views on predestination, and he slammed the children of Israel for their distorted belief. "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Luke 3:7-8)."

Because repentance is not an easy thing to accomplish, man often argues that it is God who must change the heart, but God never promised that repentance would be easy. While it is true that God will change the heart once conversion is experienced, the heart will never be changed as long as the believer refuses to fully repent.

What we have in the majority of the churches today are multitudes of seekers that are very similar to the biblical character from the book of Genesis: Lot's wife. Lot's wife was a type of a make-believer while Sodom was a type of the world. Lot's wife left Sodom (a type of many seekers that have been called by God to repentance), but when fire came down from heaven (a type of fire baptism/trying of our faith) to destroy Sodom, Lot's wife looked back towards the city to lust after her old life and was turned into a pillar of salt. The sin of Lot's wife has always been one of the greatest downfalls of mankind, for there are so many people who never realize regeneration because they are tricked into allowing themselves to feed their flesh with the lusts of the world rather than give their lives entirely to God. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62)."

Yet another doctrinal error that has the churches of today so corrupt is that they are trying to teach a post conversion message to an unconverted people. Paul's advanced gospel message on faith and predestination can only be taught under the light that God created His elect children to believe His word; and from this belief, they will sincerely repent and be obedient unto Him. Repentance and obedience to God's Word are no more than fruits of true faith. Teaching Paul's advanced message of the gospel before Jesus' and the Disciples' message of repentance and conversion is placing the "*cart before the horse*." Although man is justified by faith, without repentance, the foremost fruit of faith, a man can never be born-again. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3)."

God is just, for all that will be damned will have

resisted God's grace and will have refused to repent. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye (Acts 7:51)."

I believe the parable of the sower best illustrates the different possibilities that a person may experience once called by God: "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty (Matt 13:18-23)."

What does true repentance consist of?

Once a man is called by God to repentance, the Lord expects him to sincerely respond by bringing forth "fruits (Self denial, obedience to God's Word, and sincere sorrow for ones sin) meet for repentance," until his heart has been purged from sin and the world. During the repentance period, which is part of the justification and sanctification experience, the seeker's faith and obedience to God should grow; and eventually, if he believes God's Word and repents thoroughly, he will experience conversion.

I would like to use an analogy to help explain the importance of repentance in God's plan. True repentance is like a gardener preparing the soil of his garden for planting. The gardener will first remove the undesirable objects in his planting area such as weeds and stones, and then he will proceed to break up the hard soil. The preparation of the soil will allow for the seed that the gardener plants to have a chance for survival. The gardener is God, and the planting area of the garden is the

heart of man. The Lord, through conviction, will call the sinner from sin to repentance; and by trials and testing, He will remove everything undesirable from the heart of the believer to allow for true conversion to take place. Once the soil has been thoroughly prepared, God will plant the seed of divine life in the believer's heart, and at this point he is saved.

The seed that the Lord sows is a portion of His spirit, which is what the scripture identifies as Holy Spirit baptism or as being sealed by the Holy Spirit. Once this baptism takes place, the desires of the heart will be changed, so the believer can begin living by faith. Over time, if the divine life in the heart of the believer is cultivated properly by the person attending to his spiritual walk, the believer will be transformed by the Spirit into the image of Christ.

Are you searching for Jesus? There is a place, far off the beaten path, where God longs to dwell in the hearts of men; and if you truly thirst to know the Lord, you can find him abiding away from the desires of the world and far from a life of sin.

14

~ **Baptism** ~

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Sometime during the initial call by the Lord for the sinner to repent, the seeker will desire to be baptized. God places this desire into the heart of the seeker, for initially baptism is God's provided way for the washing away of our sins, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16)."

A little earlier, I addressed the paganism that was allowed to creep into the Godhead. And because the scripture teaches us that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," or in more plain English: a little lie will corrupt the whole truth, I believe that it is now critical to expose another vital doctrinal perversion that has crept into the Christian religion. The church, for over fifteen hundred years, has forsaken the original apostolic baptism and has adopted a false substitute, which should cause alarm amongst the people. Not only do most Christian churches of today confess to believe in the pagan Trinity, they also baptize with a false baptism using God's titles.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt 28:19)." Based on this one verse in the Bible, most Christian religions of today ignore the rest of the scripture

that commands the believer to use Jesus' name in whatever he does. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col 3:17)."

There is no record in the entire Bible of anyone being baptized in the titles of Christ, and every example that was recorded in God's Word, Jesus' name was used. The "*Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*" are titles for the three manifestations of God and not a name. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor 6:11)."

The false, "*Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*," baptism was created due to a misunderstanding of the Godhead, so I believe it is vitally important for everyone who has been baptized in the titles of Jesus, the papist baptism, to seriously consider being re-baptized in the name of "*The Lord Jesus Christ*." "And he (Paul) said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto Johns baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:3-5)." The scripture is certainly clear in that whatever the Christian does, he is to do all things in the name of Jesus.

There are many forms of baptism used by the churches today, for some sprinkle, others submerge, while others dunk three times. In the Bible, submerging and no other method was used in baptisms, and in fact the word "baptize" means to submerge. No infants were ever baptized since the scripture is clear that a man must repent and believe on Jesus Christ before he is baptized, and triune dunking was never mentioned in the Holy Scripture either.

Beware of the many false teachers of today who state that baptism is only a symbol, which the seeker is not required to perform. Beware of these false teachers, for they are calling both Peter and Paul liars. "Then Peter said

unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one 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).“ It would be absurd to believe that all of the men of God in the New Testament would waste their time teaching and performing water baptism if God did not require it.

Our Lord taught that to be saved everyone must be baptized, and the Lord was even responsible for more people being baptized than John the Baptist – “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (John 4:1).“

“Faith without works is dead” - baptism is a commandment of God and a work of faith.

15

~ The Fire ~

Zechariah 13:9

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them:

I will say, It is my people: and they shall say,
The LORD is my God.

One Christian experience that has been misunderstood by many people throughout church history is baptism by fire. The scripture teaches us that a believer's faith will be tried by fire, and this trying will be through many temptations. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (James 1:12)."

The believer's faith being tried by "fire" is an inseparable part of the born-again experience and is a major part of the conversion process. The reason that a man will not realize true conversion is due to his lack of faith, which manifests itself by a person refusing to sincerely repent and continue in God's Word; so the seeker fails the trial of his faith as the "*Parable of the Sower*" teaches. If man would only stop allowing the devil to trick him into making every possible excuse to get out of being obedient to God, man would more readily survive the testing of his faith. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that

house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it (Matt 7:24-27).“

After a man hears the gospel of Christ Jesus, sincerely believes, and repents, the Lord allows for a testing of his faith. This testing helps purify the believer and is what the scripture depicts as baptism by fire; and on occasion, as the previous verse mentions, the Bible likens this testing to something other than fire, such as a storm. During fire baptism, the Lord will allow the devil to tempt the seeker with everything imaginable, and the devil will use against him the things that a man loves most in the world, such as materialism, pride, lust, his friends, and even his spouse and children. And if the believer is not willing to forsake everything for God, the scripture informs man that he is not worthy of salvation:

Matthew 10:34-39

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth:
I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

While a believer is being tried, the Lord will allow for him to be broken down with many trials and tribulations, and when he can no longer take the trials that are besetting him, he must cry out to God for deliverance. If a man makes it this far through the fire and he continues in God's Word, the Lord will begin breaking up the hard soil

of his heart with much anguish and tears. The state of the believer during the new birth is not a very attractive thing with him weeping for himself, weeping for God's help, and weeping for his own sinfulness being commonplace.

After the Lord has allowed the seeker to be totally beaten down, He will begin to slowly build him back up, and a new man will begin to emerge - but he must be careful because at this point conversion has yet to take place.

God will continue this testing and purging of the believer's sin and carnality, until all of the weeds of sin and carnal desire have been removed from his heart. Not until after the heart has been cleansed from its sinful and carnal desire, can the believer be converted. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (I-Heb 12:6-11)."

There have been many great men of God throughout history that were refined in the fire, but many of them failed to understand this part of the Judeo-Christian experience. The Holy Scripture is full of people who had their faith tried. Since biblical times, true men of God have continued to experience major trials of faith with many finding their way to martyrdom. To study just a couple of noteworthy men since biblical times, one can examine the conversion of George Whitefield or Martin Luther. Both men went through baptism by fire, and both men came out of it believing that the Lord was showing them that salvation is by faith, not of works. While it is true that a man is justified by faith, neither one of these men, like many other great Godly men through time, realized that these trials are actually part of the repentance and conversion process used by God for the testing and perfecting of the believer's faith. It is during

baptism by fire that the Lord will clean us up and bring us to the showdown - God or the world? “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness (Mal 3:2-3).”

16

~ Justification ~

Hebrews 10:38-39

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

After the Lord calls the sinner to repentance, the Lord will have to make a determination on whether to save the sinner or not. God chose the believing of His word as justification to save some men while He chose unbelief to warrant the damnation of others. Justification, simply put, is the grounds God chose to select some men for heaven and others for hell.

The scripture tells us that the believer is justified by faith and that his faith is not of his own doing, but rather, it is a gift of God. I would like to take a moment to explain that faith is a substance, a gift, which is given to man by God, so it is possible for him to believe or disbelieve. Believing or disbelieving is an action that accompanies faith, while obedience to God and His word is a work of belief and disobedience to God and His word is a work of unbelief.

The justification of a believer can be broken down into two main categories: Faith & Works.

Faith, or believing in God's Word, has always been God's chosen method for justifying a man. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16)."

In the Garden of Eden, God required one thing from Adam and Eve and that was faith in His word. If Eve had not disbelieved God's Word, her work of unbelief, which was disobedience, or more plainly the eating of the forbidden tree, would have never happened; and the fall of man would have never taken place. God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, through "the foolishness of preaching," has placed everyone in very similar circumstances as He did Adam and Eve in the Garden. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, a man has to believe God's Word, for the "just shall live by faith," and not partake of the forbidden fruit (repent), and he shall be saved.

Throughout the history of the Christian church, many people have misunderstood the concept of faith. A person's actions are determined by what he truly believes deep inside of his heart. If a man has faulty beliefs or lacks faith, his actions will reveal this. Many people believe that they are saved because they confess Jesus to be their savior, which is true in part; however, the scripture also teaches man that if he believes, he will have fruits come forth from his faith.

If a man is a true believer, he will know in his heart that he can only obtain salvation by God's grace, through faith; however, he should also know that if he is disobedient to God and His word, he lacks true faith. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 Jn 2:3-4)."

The major difference that Christ pointed out between works and faith was the fact that works are an outward adhering to God's will, while faith is the inward adhering to God's will. The nineteenth century Scottish historian Sir James Mackintosh once made this insightful statement on inward versus outward religion, "*The Calvinistic people of Scotland, Switzerland, Holland, and New England, have been more moral than the same classes among other nations. Those who preached faith, or in other words a pure mind, have always produced more popular virtue than those who preached good acts, or the*

mere regulation of outward works.” (B3)

Long before Sir Mackintosh was even born, the Lord Jesus made this powerful assertion about true religion being the purity of thought and not of outer works, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also (Matt 23:25-26).”

The Law taught man to know the outward difference between good and evil acts, while Christ taught him to recognize that sin originates in his thoughts and beliefs; and if man entertains negative or sinful thoughts, he is sinning. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Rom 2:28-29).” If the believer continually attends to the spirit and refuses to think sinful or negative thoughts, the believer’s habit of sinning will eventually be broken.

The goal of every Christian believer should be to maintain such purity of thought that anyone, even an enemy, can enter into the believer’s mind at any time and only find goodness. The Nineteenth Century American clergyman Ray Palmer made this statement on sinful thought, “*If you would be free from sin, fly temptation: he that does not endeavor to avoid the one cannot expect Providence to protect him from the other. If the first sparks of ill were quenched, there would be no flame, for how can he kill, that dares not be angry; or be an adulterer in act, who does not transgress in thought; or be perjured, that fears an oath, or defraud, that does not allow himself to covet?*” (B3)

Faith is a beautiful gift when a loved one is ill, our enemies rise against us, our fears assail us, our livelihood is in jeopardy, or our lives are at stake; for it is then that we trust in the Lord by faith and not in ourselves, and we feel little to no burden and are free from worry because we

know that nothing can happen to us unless the Lord allows it. And if an unwanted event does find its way into our life, we should always remember that every single trial, tribulation, or any bad thing that happens, the Lord allows; and it is always to build character in us. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28).”

Works are the fruits of man’s faith, for if he truly believes God’s Word, he will be naturally obedient to the scripture either by desire or by the conscious resisting of evil. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (James 2:17).” And if man is “justified by faith” and his faith is dead, then he is not justified. “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves (James 1:21-22)”

I hope there is no one who believes that their deeds can earn them salvation; and if they do, I pray they come to realize that no matter how many good works they perform, they can never pay the debt that they owe to God. Just as a journey to a theater does not pay ones price of admission to get in, repentance and obedience to God cannot buy the atonement; but rather, it is only the means to get a man to the place where access to God can be given. The feeding of the poor, going to church, paying tithes, helping others, counting beads or other religious vanities, et cetera, can never earn anyone their salvation, so man must approach God through sincere repentance while believing His word and pleading for forgiveness.

Benjamin Franklin, on one occasion, wrote in a letter to the Rev. George Whitefield a very good analogy on whether anyone deserved to go to heaven, which I would like to quote, “*You will see in this my notion of good works, - that I am far from expecting to merit heaven by them. By heaven we understand a state of happiness, infinite in degree, and eternal in duration; I can do nothing to deserve such rewards. He that for giving a*

draught of water to a thirsty person should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands, compared with those who think they deserve heaven for the little good they do on earth. Even the mixed, imperfect pleasures we enjoy in this world are rather from God's goodness than our merit; how much more such happiness of heaven!" (B6).

To be justified by faith, a person must live by faith. There are many partial believers who do surmise that if they believe Jesus died for their sins they are justified. However, this is far from the whole truth, and it would be extremely irresponsible to neglect the whole of the scripture to believe a part. "... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt 4:4)." The scripture is abundantly clear that to be justified by faith a man must believe all of God's Word, and if he possesses true faith, it will manifest itself by his obedience and singleness of mind towards God and His Holy Word.

The justification of a man's soul includes: a call from God, man believing God and His word, and a sincere and lasting response towards God.

~ Sanctification ~

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
 that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,
 acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye
 transformed by the renewing of your mind,
 that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable,
 and perfect, will of God.

Sanctification is a doctrine that has divided the children of God throughout the ages. Sanctification is a work of grace, and a process whereby the Holy Spirit cleans man up, through faith; so man may be consecrated to God. The Lord requires that His children be pure as He is pure, so He begins purifying the believer the minute He calls him. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour (1 Thes 4:3-4).” “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Pet 1:16).” Sanctification is abstinence from sin and carnal desires - inwardly as well as outwardly.

Although the atonement that God has provided for man’s sin and for his righteousness is ample enough to clean him up for salvation, if God did not provide the sanctification process, man would soon return to wallow in his old filthy ways, even in heaven as the fallen angels had once done. The English theologian Daniel Wilson once stated, “*No man will go to heaven when he dies who*

has not sent his heart thither while he lives. Our greatest security is to be derived from duty, and our only confidence from the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.”

There are two separate segments in the process of sanctification: Pre-conversion and Post-conversion.

Pre-conversion sanctification is driven by the fear of God and self preservation, and since the seeker’s heart has not yet been sealed by the Holy Spirit, the seeker must fight tooth-and-nail to resist sin and apply the scripture to his life. Only after the conversion process is complete will the believer be able to live by faith and not by fear.

We will find that before we are converted, we will be forced to struggle with Satan continuously, and God will allow many things to come to pass that will purge out our unbelief and thus purge out our desire for sin and carnal things. We will also find on many occasions during the process of pre-conversion sanctification that we cannot overcome our sinful nature, so when we do experience weakness or come to the end of our rope, we must call on the Lord Jesus with a sincere heart; and then the Lord will help us overcome. If we do not approach God’s throne with sincerity, God will not assist us; and if we do not resist the devil, the devil will never flee from us.

Sanctification is where many of the churches today have made their biggest folly. The scripture teaches us that God must make us a new man, or vessel (new bottle), before He can fill us with his Spirit (new wine). “And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved (Luke 5:37-38).” A sadness comes over me every time I reflect that so many people will not receive salvation because they fail to yield to the Spirit long enough to be justified and sanctified for their conversion to take place. Some may say, “*hold on there, are you telling me that I need to sanctify myself to be saved, isn’t that a work?*” Yes, it is a work, a work of the Holy Spirit, through grace, by faith. “...Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. ...If a man therefore purge himself from

these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work (2 Tim 2:19-21)."

I have had many people in my past, who have misunderstood God's Word, tell me that I should not try to stop sinning for that would be my righteousness and not His, and my righteousness is like filthy rags unto the Lord. But the scripture tells us that through Christ Jesus, "we are more than conquerors." "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 Jn 3:3)." It is not we that desire to be righteous-it is Christ working in us. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Rom 3:10-12)." So, if it is not in our nature to desire to be righteous and in our heart we do not attempt to be righteous for the praise of our fellow man, then it is God who is performing a work in us.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded (James 4:7-8)." "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness (Rom 6:16)!"

Pre-conversion sanctification is one and the same as full repentance.

Post-conversion sanctification begins after justification is realized. Once we have been converted (Justified and Holy Spirit baptized), our sanctification continues through desire, and not by fear, with the believer's holiness increasing as his relationship with Christ strengthens. It is by attending to our spiritual walk and not to our flesh that our relationship with Christ grows. If we become complacent in our daily walk with the Lord, God will not hesitate to send the fire once again - the deeper the root of sin or disobedience, the larger the fire. We must always keep in mind that hardship can be

experienced by a believer to prove him like God did with Job, which means that we should never judge others based on their bad fortune.

The sanctification process is vital to a Christian's successful walk with Christ because God will not dwell in the presence of sin. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa 59:1-2)."

God will never seal a man with the Holy Spirit, unless he first possesses a clean heart.

For how can a Holy Spirit dwell in an unholy heart?

18

~ Holy Spirit Baptism ~

Luke 24:49

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you:
but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued
with power from on high.

I would like to discuss the evidence of having been Holy Spirit baptized (saved), because a continuing danger has existed amongst professors of Christ throughout church history. The hazard that confronts many people is that a person can believe with all of their heart that they are saved, and even have many manifestations of the new birth, but in reality they only have a head knowledge (gnostic) religion.

Holy Spirit baptism is a discernable crisis experience where God takes a portion of His Spirit and places it inside of the heart of a repented believer. The Spirit He places in the repentant heart allows for the believer to be made over time into the spiritual image of God. Without this Divine life inside of the believer, the believer can never fully live by faith or truly please God; but with this Divine life inside of the believer, the believer will be transformed into a new creature.

The founder of Methodism, the devout John Wesley, believed at one point in his life that he was saved and was even a minister in the Anglican Church, but shortly after he was confronted with death during a violent storm at sea, he had these words to say, *“I went to America, to convert the Indians; but O! Who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of*

mischief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain!' ...O! who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it?" (B8)

A little over four months after John Wesley tasted his brush with death, he described his own crisis conversion experience when he wrote, "...One was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle of Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins." (B8) Shortly after Mr. Wesley had been truly converted, his life and ministry were powerfully transformed.

There are many people who never realize a relationship with the Lord because they have been taught that baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place when a man first believes or when he is baptized in water, so many do not continue in God's Word until they are saved. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed (Acts 19:2)?" "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (1-Heb 10:39)."

So what do most churches hold as evidence of Holy Spirit baptism today?

Some groups believe that speaking in tongues is the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, and some groups believe it is confessing Christ to be their savior. There are other groups that believe it is the fruits of the Spirit while other groups believe it is accepting a certain prophet's message - et cetera.

Is it speaking in tongues? "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues... (Mark 16: 17)" Speaking in tongues often accompanied the crisis Spirit baptism in the early church, but no where in the scripture does it state

that speaking in tongues will be every believer's manifestation of Holy Spirit baptism. I believe that the Spirit baptism John Wesley received, mentioned earlier in this chapter, was identical in power to the Holy Spirit baptism received at Pentecost, only without the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Paul addresses in the book of 1 Corinthians that all do not speak in tongues. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret (1 Cor 12:28-30)?" If anyone is not convinced that this verse is enough evidence to show that all do not speak in tongues when receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, then please study the lives of Wycliffe, Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, Whitefield, and Wesley, et cetera, and then honestly tell me that these men never experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit because not one of them reported that they had ever spoken in tongues - yet, their ministries shook the world.

Most people today actually practice babbling instead of the true gift of tongues. Every time a person spoke in tongues in the scripture, there was someone to interpret, and the languages were known languages of the world but unknown to the speaker. Speaking in tongues can be evidence of being saved, but it is not the only evidence. I believe we should examine our lives by comparing it to God's Word for the required manifestations of God's Spirit - and not only a few gifts.

Many today believe that the proof of Holy Spirit baptism is a person confessing Christ to be their savior. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt 7:21)." We see here that not everyone who claims to be a Christian will make it to heaven, and in fact, it is only those who do the will of the Lord.

There are other's who believe that accepting the word

of the hour or some prophet's message is proof of the new birth, but who can say when the hour has passed; for all religions claim that their messenger's message is the only one - yet the majority of the followers of these religions are dead. It would be a terrible mistake to have a pope that prevents us from personally experiencing a relationship with God, but it would be even more horrendous to follow a dead pope. In reality, the believer for salvation is only required to believe in Christ Jesus and His word while believing that without Him they are damned; otherwise, these prophets and their messages become co-saviors with Christ, which is blasphemous. If anyone thoroughly studies the history of revivals in God's true church, they will have to conclude that a revival has never began from any dead man's religion, for God has always delivered fresh manna via the living.

While there are a lot of different claims on what the evidence of the Holy Spirit is, the fruits of a man, or more plainly the works that show forth in his life, are what Christ repeatedly taught would reveal a believer from a make-believer. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matt 7:20)." A person's actions, and the fruits of the Spirit, are definitely the most convincing proofs of Holy Spirit baptism. The fruits of a born-again believer will come from the heart and will be identical to the ones listed in the scripture (Love, patience, obedience, etc.). The scripture repeatedly teaches us that a man will reveal by his character, words, and deeds whether he has been saved or not.

So what are the major evidences of the Holy Spirit in a believer? Fruits of the Spirit are evidence that a person has the Holy Spirit. A person's deeds and actions will reveal if he has the Holy Spirit. Obedience to God's Word is another evidence. Someone who lives solely for Christ every day and denies his own desires to serve Christ is evidence. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt 16:24)." Speaking in tongues and divine healing are evidence. And, I believe we could go on and on, so let me try to sum

it up.

If we have the Holy Spirit, we will have passed through the fire and will love our fellow man no matter what his color or religion may be. By desire we will deny ourselves and will try to live totally by the scripture. We will be obedient to God's Word from the heart. Our lives will manifest the fruits of the Spirit, and we will despise the things of the world. We will be a believer on Jesus and will trust Him in all things. The religion that we practice in private, as well as in our heart, will be identical to the one that we practice in public. We will believe all of God's Word. We will have experienced a crisis conversion experience that will have wrought a total change in our heart. And last but not least, we will love the Lord our God so much that we will rarely desire to do anything that does not further His kingdom.

Provided below is an excellent description of the evidence of the new birth taken from a John Wesley sermon entitled, "*The almost Christian.*"

"What more than this is implied in the being altogether a Christian?" I answer,

First, The love of God. For thus saith His word, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' Such a love [of God] is this, as engrosses the whole heart, as takes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his God, his spirit continually 'rejoiceth in God his Saviour.' His delight is in the Lord, his Lord and his All, to whom 'in everything he giveth thanks. All his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of His name.' His heart is ever crying out, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.' Indeed, what can he desire beside God? Not the world, or the things of the world: for he is 'crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him.' He is crucified to 'the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.' Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind: for 'love is not puffed up'; but 'he that dwelling in love, dwelleth in God, and

God in him,' is less than nothing in his own eyes."

The second thing implied in the being altogether a Christian is, the love of our neighbour. For thus said our Lord, in the following words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If any man ask, "Who is my neighbour?" we reply, Every man in the world; every child of His who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Nor may we in any wise except our enemies, or the enemies of God and their own souls. But every Christian loveth these also as himself, yea, 'as Christ loved us.' He that would more fully understand what manner of love this is, may consider St. Paul's description of it. It is 'long-suffering and kind.' It 'envieth not.' It is not rash or hasty in judging. It 'is not puffed up'; but maketh him that loves, the least, the servant, of all. Love 'doth not behave itself unseemly'; but becometh 'all things to all men.' She 'seeketh not her own'; but only the good of others, that they may be saved. 'Love is not provoked.' It casteth out wrath, which he who hath is [not made perfect] in love. 'It thinketh no evil. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'

There is yet one thing more that may be separately considered, though it cannot actually be separate from the preceding, which is implied in the being altogether a Christian; and that is the ground of all, even faith. Very excellent things are spoken of this throughout the oracles of God. 'Every one,'" saith the beloved disciple, 'that believeth is born of God.' 'To as many as received Him, gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name.' And 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Yea, our Lord Himself declares, 'He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and cometh not into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.'

But here let no man deceive his own soul. 'It is diligently to be noted, the faith which bringeth not forth repentance, and love, and all good works, is not that right living faith [which is here spoken of], but a dead

and devilish one. For even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that He wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring Himself very God; that, for our sakes, He suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting; that He rose again the third day; that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and at the end of the world shall come again to judge both the quick and dead. These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true Christian faith.'

'The right and true Christian faith is' (to go on in the words of our own Church), 'not only to believe that Holy Scripture and the Articles of our Faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ. It is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God; whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey His commandments.'

Now, whosoever has this faith, which 'purifies the heart' (by the power of God, who dwelleth therein) from pride, anger, desire, 'from all unrighteousness,' from 'all filthiness of flesh and spirit'; which fills it with love stronger than death, both to God and to all mankind; love that doeth the works of God, glorying to spend and to be spent for all men, and that endureth with joy, not only the reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised, and hated of all men, but whatsoever the wisdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict,-whosoever has this faith, thus working by love, is not almost only, but altogether, a Christian." (B7)

If we search ourselves, we will find that every action comes from a motivation. If we examine thoroughly all of our motivations, we will see that if we are unconverted our motivations are continually selfish. However, after the new birth is received, the Holy Spirit in our heart will transform this selfishness into selflessness, and this is the greatest mark of the new birth. For the root of all sin is

unbelief with all sin being grounded in selfishness.

I cannot expound enough on the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit baptism. Please, do not assume that you have received the new birth because you believe in Christ Jesus or some special doctrine, you need to ensure that your life manifests the fruits of true conversion- “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb 10:39).” With this having been said, even with all faith, all works, and complete repentance, all of these wonderful blessings of grace mean absolutely nothing if the Holy Spirit does not go into the heart; because if conversion does not take place, the believer cannot truly know the love of God. For the love of God resides in His own Spirit, so to sincerely love God, to be able to put His interests and the needs of others before our own, and to keep the commandments of God unselfishly, we must receive His Spirit into our hearts.

Until the new birth takes place, we live selfishly for our selves and never put God, or even others, before our own desires. Until after the new birth is given, every commandment of God we keep is to further our own selfish means, with even our repentance, a work of faith, being performed to save our own souls from hellfire and not to glorify God. Faith, and works of faith, are only means of grace that allow access to God, but cannot save the soul being alone; but rather, the new birth, and the new birth alone, saves the soul, for it is God imparting forgiveness, the gift of eternal life, and unselfish love into the furthest depths of the human heart-it is God imparting a portion of His Spirit to the believer which will take dominion over the soul.

19

~ Fasting, Praise, Prayer, & God's Word ~

Matthew 17:20-21

...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,
ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to
yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be
impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out
but by prayer and fasting.

Fasting, praise, prayer, and God's Word have always been an integral part of the Christian religion. All of these, if utilized correctly, help the believer overcome the world and bring forth a faith that is capable of receiving all of the blessings of God.

I can not begin to state the importance of regular praise, prayer, fasting, and the partaking of God's Word. Many people attempt to repent and flee from sin, but many are unsuccessful due to their lack of attending for their spirit's needs. The seventeenth century English scholar Abraham Fuller once wrote this infinitely valuable and truthful insight on attending to the spirit, "*Sin is to be overcome, not so much by direct opposition to it as by cultivating opposite principles. Would you kill the weeds in your garden, plant it with good seed; if the ground be well occupied there will be less need of the hoe.*" (B3)

During my conversion experience, I realized that practicing sincere praise, prayer, and studying God's Word daily helped me greatly in my walk with the Lord with occasional fasting also helping. Shortly after having

experienced conversion, I began a new job, and the amount of time that I spent with the Lord began to dwindle greatly. Because of my neglect for my spiritual needs, I immediately began slipping in my walk with Christ. Once I realized that I was suffering from not attending to my spiritual walk, I began, once again, attending daily to my relationship with the Lord Jesus; and within a short period of time, my walk with the Lord was strengthened immensely.

A man consists of two main elements: A physical and a spiritual being. The physical being is at enmity with God because it has been corrupted by sin. Our physical being, having been equipped with very powerful reality and senses, continually suppresses our spirituality. If we do not suppress the feeding of our flesh with the things of this world, our spiritual being will be overpowered by our physical body, and we will have great difficulty obtaining the faith that is so important in the Christian's daily walk. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal 5:16)."

The suppressing of the flesh helps the spiritual body grow stronger while the feeding of the spiritual body also promotes growth. So through faith and by fasting, praise, prayer, and feeding on God's Word, we can become the children that God created us to be.

Fasting - can be broken down into two types: One is abstaining from the lusts of the flesh while the other is fasting from food. Fasting from the world and food both have similar effects that will lead the believer into a closer walk with Christ. Fasting from the world is when a believer abstains from sin and the carnal things of the world. The things of the world are at enmity with God, and a believer should seriously consider not partaking of them because they only distract a person from serving God while weakening the person's faith.

Once the mind meditates only on the things of God and is withdrawn from Satan's vices, the spirit will grow stronger and more pure without the pollution of the flesh warring with the spirit. There is an old saying that I have heard people use on occasion, "*Trash in, Trash out.*" If we

stop and take a moment to consider society, we would see that crime and perversion is on the increase because everywhere we go there is only crime and perversion for our spirit's to feed on: movies, TV, radio, secular music, books, billboards, magazines, and perverted people, et cetera. I believe the opposite holds true as well - *if only God goes in, then only God will come out.*

Many people have a hard time giving up the desires of the world such as movies and television; but if they stopped and seriously considered that the Lord and His prophets spoke out against the sinful deeds that make up much of the entertainment programs, I would hope that people would quit wasting their time destroying their lives by watching these soul killers. Should we not be concerned over our salvation if we continue to take pleasure in watching some show where the characters continually break every commandment that God has given to man?

Another type of fasting is the abstaining from food. Fasting is not an act that receives a reward, but it does allow for an increase in faith. It is the increase in faith that helps us to please God and to be obedient to Him. Abstaining from food in conjunction with abstaining from the world allows for the believer to walk in the spirit more easily because the flesh loses its strength more rapidly. Another great effect of fasting from food for several days or more is that it helps humble the heart and mind. *Note: Too much fasting from food, or lack of sleep, can make a believer's mental state weakened to the point where the believer is an easy target for Satan. Only a very mature Christian should fast for long periods of time.*

Praise - there are two types: The first type of praise is where God fills the believer with so much of His Spirit that the believer cannot help but let some bubble out; while the second type of praise is where the believer intentionally praises God to allow for his heart and mind to be fixed on Christ. When praise is giving by faith, the believer's spirit is renewed and strengthened.

A Christian at times can become overwhelmed with the adversities of life, and this is why it is so important for the

believer to praise the Lord as often as possible. Praise is singing songs to the Lord, testifying to others, bubbling over (shouting praises, joy unspeakable (not uncontrollable laughter though I've had it often), et cetera), and thanksgiving. Praise helps allow the mind of the believer to remain on Jesus and off of the things of the world. Praise from the heart is one of the few offerings to God that we can truly call our own, for our heart is the only possession that God will never take from us, unless we give it freely to Him.

If the believer continually gives praise, prays, and attends to the things of the Lord, he will grow very strong. But does this mean a man should live in a monastery or live isolated from civilization, so he can spend all of his days with God? "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil (John 17:15)."

Prayer - so effective are the sincere prayers of God's children that on occasion even monarchs have taken notice. Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic Queen renowned for her butchering of the Protestants during the reformation period, once said, "*I fear the prayers of John Knox more than an army of 10,000 men*" (B5).

Prayer allows us to rest from the world while communing and talking with God. We should pray continually because our prayers delight the Lord. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight (Prov 15:8)." Prayer also allows us to petition God for our needs and desires. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive (Matt 21:22)."

There is an old Pentecostal saying that is characterized as, "*getting in the spirit.*" "*Getting in the spirit*" is a must to become a true Christian. We cannot expect that as soon as we get on our knees to pray or as soon as we begin praising the Lord, He will respond. We are continually in the world and dwelling on the things of the world, yet for our faith to activate the blessings of God, we must forget about all of our daily distractions and focus wholly on the

Lord; and sometimes this may take a while. So if we have never approached the throne of God for more than a few minutes, we are probably not effectively utilizing our privilege of petitioning God for our needs. "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16)."

There is also another old Pentecostal term called, "*praying through*." "*Praying through*" is where we get on our knees before the Lord to pray for some blessing that we feel is critical for our life. Sometimes we may have to spend hours in prayer to God before God will grant us our request. The most common reason for "*praying through*" is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The English divine Thomas Fuller once wrote this statement on the importance of prayer, "*Leave not off praying to God: for either praying will make thee leave off sinning; or continuing in sin will make thee desist from praying.*" (B3)

God's Word - hearing and reading it regularly is vital to having a good relationship with the Lord. For how can we please God if we have little to no idea of what he stands for or wants from us? Many people mistakenly think that they believe in Jesus - when in fact, they only believe in an historical figure that they know very little about. To be saved, we must not only believe in the historical figure of Jesus, but we must also believe in everything that He taught and stands for.

I mentioned earlier in this work that reading the Bible only to confirm our religion, versus reading the Bible to deny our religion, is a grave mistake. A person would be extremely hard pressed to find anyone whose faith does not deny multiple verses in the scripture. Most people do not think to use the scripture to deny their beliefs and not only to confirm them, so many false doctrines have crept into man's religion. Once we learn to deny our false beliefs, we will begin to see more clearly the true meaning of God's Word. We may not immediately be enlightened entirely to the truth, but if we do know what not to believe, we can at least continue in our search for God's truth instead of being deceived into thinking that we have already found it.

Fasting, praise, and prayer, along with the word of God, all work in unison as tools to help us increase our faith and walk in the spirit. So, when the storms of Hell rage against us, let us not forget God's provided tools that can help us to overcome.

20

~ Led by the Spirit ~

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

A perceivable presence of God will remain with us if we are a sanctified and Spirit filled believer, and this presence will noticeably try to lead us in our lives. This Spirit leading is what is known in the Christian religion as being “*led by the Spirit.*” The stronger our spirit grows; the less we will attend to our sinful and carnal desires, and the more we will begin experiencing the presence of God. If we do attend to our spiritual walk and take the time to be aware of God’s presence, we should start to perceive that the Lord continuously tries to lead us.

When being led by the Spirit, we will experience the Holy Spirit planting thoughts and desires into our hearts that will assist us in our walk with Him, and we should never fail to compare our thoughts with the scripture because the devil will also plant thoughts and images into our minds. However, the closer one gets to God, the ideas of Satan become less clear, less frequent, and less powerful.

After we begin paying mind to the spiritual leading of God, it should become obvious to us that absolute obedience to God’s Word and the furtherance of His kingdom are the continuous desires that God has for our lives. Once we commence to trusting in the Lord, He will take more noticeable care of us in all of the aspects of our lives, and once we line up with His word, He is duty bound to answer our prayers of faith.

To be successful in being led by the Spirit, self examination is a practice we should commit to, for examining oneself is critical since we can only grow in Christ if we are keeping ourselves from the world and are attending to our relationship with Him. The English Bishop Jeremy Taylor once said, “*Observe thyself as thy greatest enemy would do, so shalt thou be thy greatest friend.*” (B3)

21

~ Communion & Foot Washing ~

John 6:53-54

Then Jesus said unto them,

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

Communion is the partaking of unleavened bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord, and as the previous verse tells us, it is a required act to receive the new birth. Communion has been the target of much of Satan's trickery, and there have been many false beliefs on communion that have been held within the church.

One such belief is that our Lord Jesus would not have drunk wine, and this word in Greek really means juice, et cetera - these teachers have been deceived by the devil. The scripture states that wine was used for communion, and the men of God in the scripture drank wine on numerous occasions. And in fact, it is foolish for us to judge our Lord and his prophets and try to make others believe that they did not use wine but grape juice, for if we do this, we are judging the very God we claim to worship. When communion was given to the disciples at the time of Passover, without modern technology, all of the grapes in Israel would have perished months before.

The ancient process of wine making symbolizes our transformation into a Christian. The grapes are crushed and covered with a cloth (we are broken and stripped of

all hope in this world), and then as the wine matures (fire baptism & repentance), all of the impurities (sin) float to the top of the wine and are scooped off by the wine maker (God). And when the impurities have been removed and the wine is fermented (we are justified and sufficiently sanctified), the wine maker then bottles the wine (God seals us with the baptism of the Holy Spirit).

I mention the use of wine for a very important reason. All through the scripture, God commanded men to do things a certain way, and on many occasions, men were condemned by God for not following His commandments exactly to the letter. On one such occasion, Moses, being an excellent man of God and of very high rank in the kingdom of heaven, was not allowed to go over into the promise land because he was disobedient in one point in keeping the Lord's commandment. "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them (Num 20:11-12)." God had told Moses to speak to the rock, not smite it, and this is why the Lord did not allow Moses to enter into the promise land. On many occasion in the scripture, God told man to do a certain thing in a certain way, and man, in his feeble wisdom, would not listen to God or His word and would do it his own way.

Another such case was the King Naaman of Syria, who had leprosy and desired to be healed, but the King of Syria was fortunate for he listened to God, although not at first, and was healed. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, ... Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some

great thing, wouldest thou not have done it! how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (II Ki 5:10-14).“

There are many people in the world today, who believe that much of God’s Word is symbolism, and we do not need to actually do what the scripture dictates. Oh we of little faith, let us not take chances with our salvation, if God said wine, then wine should be used for communion. If God instructed a woman to have long hair and a man to have short hair (1 Cor 11), then we should abide by His wishes. If God instructed a woman not to wear the clothing of a man, and vice-versa, then we should not practice cross-dressing (Deu 22-5) - Et cetera.

The Jews used unleavened bread (water and plain flour baked) and kosher wine for Passover. Therefore to be safe, unleavened bread and kosher wine should be used for communion. Can I do communion at home? Yes, we can do communion anywhere, but we should have at least two people so foot washing can be done afterwards.

Transubstantiation is another false belief that was started by the Church of Rome. Transubstantiation is the doctrine that the communion bread actually becomes the literal body of Jesus Christ, and when a man eats the communion bread, he is actually eating the flesh of Jesus. I believe anyone who has taken communion realizes that the bread is still bread; however, the Catholic Church teaches this false belief and has put many people to death throughout history for not bowing down before the little piece of baked flour. When a Catholic Priest holds up the communion wafer before the people and the people get on their knees, most Catholics do not realize that they are actually bowing down to the little piece of bread, which is very pagan.

It is perverted for a man to bow down before anything other than God Himself, for a believer must not bow down to any statues on the alter, wafers, wine glasses, or anything else in the physical world - not even an angel.

“And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God (Rev 22:8-9).” And prayer is only to be given to God and not to dead people called saints, whom are not even worthy to be in heaven without the sacrifice of Jesus. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5).” Because the scripture is clear that there is only one mediator between God and man, we must put away our saint statues of Mary, and the rest of the dead people, and pray to the living God alone.

The English divine Richard Cecil once made this statement, “*The only instance of praying to saints, mentioned in the Bible, is that of the rich man in torment calling upon Abraham; and let it be remembered, that it was practiced only by a lost soul and without success.*” (B3)

The practice of praying to dead relatives for needs, and even the making of busts or statues in the image of dead relatives for the purpose of intercessory prayer was a common practice in Rome for centuries before and after the life of Christ. However, it was not until after a watered down version of Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire by the Emperor Constantine that the pagan practice of praying to dead relatives for their spiritual assistance was transformed into the “*Communion of Saints.*” The practice of praying to dead relatives and dead saints derives from an ancient Roman pagan religious practice less commonly known as the “*Cult of the Dead.*” The Roman Catholic Church is made up almost entirely of pagan practices with even the practice of the followers paying tribute to the Pope or “*Pontiff*” being no more than the ancient Roman pagan practice of “*emperor worship.*” The practice of emperor worship can be found under the subject of “*Pontifex Maximus*” when studying the history of the Roman

Empire. A good book that addresses much of the paganism within the Catholic church is entitled, "*The Two Babylons*," by Hislop.

Foot-washing is another work required by the scripture just as baptism is. Many people who profess Christ do not practice foot-washing; although, the scripture tells us we have no part in Christ if we do not. "After that he (Jesus) poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples's feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ...If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you... (John 13:5-16)."

Foot-washing is a requirement for Christians and is done with plain tap water in a basin by the believers taking turns washing each other's feet and drying them. The importance of practicing foot-washing was addressed by the Lord Jesus. Christ was adamant that our feet would become spiritually dirty in our daily walk after we have been baptized, so we must practice foot-washing as an act of faith for a renewed spiritual cleansing of our sin.

Part III: The Elements

“Christianity did not come from heaven to be the amusement of an idle hour, or the food of mere imagination; to be ‘as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and playeth well upon an instrument.’ It is intended to be the guide and companion of all our hours – the serious occupation of our whole existence.”

Irish Protestant Bishop – John Jebb, 1755-1833, (B3)

22

~ Grace ~

Titus 2:11-12

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

The scripture teaches us that a man is justified through believing God's Word, yet it is by grace that we are saved. Grace, in the biblical sense of the word, is where God extends mercy and assistance towards mankind without man having done anything to merit this kindness from God. God's Word is clear that there are none that seek after God or righteousness; but rather, man only pursues after evil and mischief. Because of man's inherently corrupted and sinful flesh, he has always required God's grace for him to seek after and receive salvation.

Grace, and not merit, is the true foundation of Christianity. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9)." Every positive trait or strength that we possess is a gift from God, and at anytime, He may take it away.

We should always keep in mind that if God took away his grace, or even His gift of faith, like a dog returning to his vomit, we would immediately return to our spiritual wickedness. "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace

of God which was with me (1 Cor 15:10)."

It is only by God's grace that we are saved and only by grace that we can even labor for His kingdom. And while it is true that we can only be saved by God through His grace, it is also true that we are damned by resisting God and His mercy (Acts 7:51).

God's mercy is so wonderful, for if it were not for God's grace, we would all be utterly destroyed; for utter destruction is what all of mankind, even God's children, deserves.

23

~ Predestination ~

Acts 10:34-35

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

For centuries, many godly men have bickered and separated the children of God based on differences of doctrine such as predestination. Like any good General, Satan has created divisions amongst his enemies: the children of God, because the task of defeating an opposing army has always been easier if you can first divide them.

Predestination is the belief that God created some men for heaven and others for hell. Since the Bible undeniably teaches predestination, most Christian groups argue over why God predestinated some and damned others.

There are two predominant predestination beliefs held amongst Christian people today: Armenianism and Calvinism. Armenianism is the belief that a person, once convicted, enlightened, and empowered by God, has a choice to sin or to abstain from sin with the person having been predestinated for heaven or hell based on God's foreknowledge of what choices the person would make in life. Calvinism is the belief that some people, regardless of their actions, were created for heaven and others for hell; and because of man's utterly corrupted state, he is too wicked to choose God or good under any circumstances, even after being enlightened by God; therefore, it is God in the predestinated believer that chooses to do good, not

the believer, so no matter what the believer does, or doesn't do, it has no bearing on his salvation.

Since the doctrine of predestination interweaves with many other Christian concepts, I have included it in this work and have tried my best to put it in a nutshell. I personally believe that the doctrine of predestination is not nearly as important as the devil would like for us to think that it is. If the Armenian believes that Calvinistic people cannot be saved, they need to study the life of George Whitefield, amongst many others. And if the Calvinist believe that Armenians cannot be saved, they need to study the book of James, 1 John, etc..., and the life of John Wesley. It is a grave error to believe that someone has not been converted based on their predestination belief; especially since there is probably no Calvinist alive today who could even have his name mentioned in the same sentence with John Wesley and vice versa with the Armenians and George Whitefield.

So instead of thoroughly examining the doctrine of predestination due to design constraints, I feel it is more appropriate to point out that the scripture is abundantly clear that God is no respecter of persons. As the verse at the beginning of this chapter explains, God accepts anyone who keeps His commandments instead of feeding the flesh. Because God is no respecter of persons, it would be extremely dangerous for us to allow our predestination beliefs to give us excuse not to keep God's Word, for our bottom line remains the same: Obedience to God and His word is crucial. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12)."

I would like to point out that both groups believe that without God's grace and the sacrifice of Jesus it is impossible for us to be saved. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 6:23)." I am confident that true believers hold the belief that without God's grace we would all be damned and that there is only one way to heaven and that way is

Christ Jesus. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim 1:9)."

The only real difference that believing the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination can make in our lives is that it is a good tool to help combat pride and self-righteousness; however, this tool failed to benefit the Pharisees, as well as many modern Calvinist. I would like to mention again, as I have previously mentioned in the chapter "*Call & Repentance*", John the Baptist slammed the Pharisee's doctrine of predestination because it interfered with mankind's primary duty in life: Obedience to God.

The nineteenth century American clergyman, H. W. Beecher, effectively summed up election like this, "*The elect are whosoever will, and the non-elect, whosoever won't.*" (B3)

24

~ Love ~

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

I believe most Christian weddings that are held today include at least a portion of this scripture, and almost everyone that has seriously studied the Bible has been moved by it. Out of all of the religions in the world, Christianity is the only one that is centered around the concept of grace, faith, and the love for others: charity.

The word charity, in the context it is used in the scripture, is often misunderstood. The Biblical word charity does not mean “*to give to others,*” but rather, it means “*the love for others.*” The Apostle Paul, in 1st Corinthians Chapter 13, explains to us that there is

nothing in God's kingdom that compares with charity. If we possess true charity, all sin, even death, can be overcome. Sinners, make-believers, and even enemies must not be hated, for the love of others fulfills all of God's requirements and commandments. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Gal 5:14)."

We have all heard of the saying, "*Love is blind,*" and I believe most of us have witnessed a situation at some point in our life that makes us realize this statement is true. If we truly love others, we will overlook their faults as if they were our own children or a loved one, and by doing this, we will fulfill all of God's law by loving our fellow man. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Matt 5:43-44)."

Love is the foundation of all good things with mercy, kindness, patience, meekness, truth, justice, and all other good attributes hinging upon love. It is only by holy spirit baptism and by attending to our spiritual walk that we can experience the love of God, but even then, if we do not resist the work of Satan, we will grieve the Holy Spirit and will remain ineffectual. *The noise of Satan and mankind, once removed from heart and mind, all that is left to listen to, will be the voice of One Divine.*

25

~ Liberty ~

2 Corinthians 3:17

...Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

I have witnessed many people speak about the liberty of Christ without them fully understanding that holiness will still be prevalent in the life of the believer. The liberty of Christ is a beautiful gift when fully understood, but only the born-again Christian can really comprehend it. Liberty is where the believer has been delivered from sin, tradition, and outward religion and walks in faith, upright before the Lord with a new heart and conscience to guide him, tempered by the word. And because the believer has a new heart and trusts in the Lord, he desires only the things of the Lord and experiences a freedom that can only come from living for Jesus.

Liberty is a blessing in this world as well as in the spiritual world. Christ has set us at liberty to do whatever we would like to do without being held accountable to the law. However, this liberty is not given to allow us to continue in sin or to fulfill our carnal desires. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ... Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin (John 8:31-34).”

The scripture teaches us that, “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor 6:12).” Many have come and have taught false holiness doctrines

that take away the liberty that we have in Christ because we are led to place ourselves under false rules and requirements: “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage (Gal 2:4).”

Many groups teach their followers to only eat certain meats and drink certain drinks with some observing certain days above others. We do not understand the liberty in Christ if we believe this. “Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man (Matt 15:17-18).”

On the other hand, there are some that would like to use Christian liberty as an excuse to spend more time fulfilling the lusts of their flesh than attending to the business of our Lord. As believers, we can do anything we want when our motives are good and scriptural, and it is not sin. Although we can do anything we desire, if we have made it through the fire successfully, the desire for sin and the things of the world should have been purged from our hearts.

26

~ Iniquity ~

2 Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,
having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.
And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ
depart from iniquity.

The English clergyman Robert South once stated, *“He who has no mind to trade with the devil should be so wise as to keep away from his shop.”* (B1) Whenever we sin or flirt with sin, we give occasion for the devil to create more mischief in our life.

If we stop and consider that there are only two final outcomes awaiting man: heaven or hell, we should have the presence of mind to realize that everything that we do will lead us, or others, closer to God or closer to Satan. Sin leads mankind closer to damnation while faith and obedience to God’s Word leads men closer to salvation. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal 6:7-8). Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance (1 Pet 1:13-14).”

Iniquity can be broken down into three main groups: Unbelief, Sin, and Carnal Pleasure.

Unbelief is the main catalyst of all sin.

On occasion, I have heard people make foolish comments like, *“the Bible was written by man and not by God, so it cannot be accurate.”* These same people often claim to believe in God; however, it is funny to hear them confess that God made the universe and everything in it and that God is Almighty; yet, God was not capable of ensuring that a single book could be published without serious error.

Another foolish form of unbelief that has plagued society is atheism. I would like to quote something that I read one time that should help the atheist consider the absurdity of the universe emerging without a creator. *“The story is told of an atheist who held, and argued freely, that the world had no creator, but had come into being by chance. Visiting a friend one day he happened to admire a charming little miniature globe in the study. ‘What a delightful little model! Where did you buy it?’ he queried. ‘Oh, I didn’t buy it,’ was the reply. ‘Was it a present, then?’ ‘No,’ said the other, ‘it wasn’t a present. It just came by chance.’ ‘By chance?’ echoed the atheist. ‘But what nonsense!’” (B1)* So much more complex is life and the real universe than a miniature model globe, yet the atheist could not believe that the little model could come to be in a room by chance.

Sin is a work that is derived from unbelief, or even more primary selfishness, and can only be manifested after lust has been conceived in the heart. For any sin to take place, man must first disbelieve God’s Word and/or believe a lie, resist the Holy Spirit, and lust for a desire of the flesh. *“... Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:14-15).”*

Sin is an action that is destructive and harmful to humanity, and if we reflect a little on why God is so against sin, we will find that every sinful deed is horrible if we place ourselves on the receiving end of these works. Sin also kills faith, which in turn makes it impossible for us to resist evil and please God. The 16th century

reformation leader Martin Luther once summed up sin with this short insight, “*Sin is, essentially, a departure from God.*” (B3) Sinful deeds can be categorized as such acts as lying, stealing, cheating, murder, bearing false witness, worshipping (swearing allegiance to) any God other than Jehovah (Jesus being Jehovah in the flesh), coveting, pride, malice, et cetera.

Lust is the secondary cause of sin with unbelief in God’s Word being the primary. The first step in sinning is unbelief, or believing a lie, with a lustful thought such as pride, coveting, lying, et cetera immediately following, which leads to the conception of an evil seed being planted in the heart. After the seed of lust takes hold in the heart, the body is driven by desire to commit a sinful act. Faith works in a similar fashion, for if we really believe Gods word, Satan will come and try to trick us into doubting it. If the devil is not successful, a seed of faith will drop into our heart, and we will be driven by desire to be obedient to the seed of truth that dropped into our soul.

Evil/Negative Thought is from Satan, and it does create unhappiness in our lives if we do not block it out. If we would put away from our minds all negative thoughts about others no matter how they may treat us, we would be much healthier spiritually, happier, have better physical health, and the devil would eventually become more and more distant as we draw closer to God. The next time you start having a negative thought about someone else, pay attention and see how quick your personal happiness is diminished or destroyed, especially by hate. In God’s eyes, us having evil or sinful thoughts are as bad as committing the actual sin. “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt 5:28).”

Coveting is a concern because it breeds discontentment. Sexually desiring anyone that is not our own spouse kills our love, is perverted, and is a real demeaning waste of time. Lusting reminds me of dogs who are always running up and smelling each other, it is degrading for everyone involved. Pornography feeds lust, which kills the romance and love in a marriage, and it

introduces perversion into the relationship and the bedroom. Homosexuality is no more than excessive perverted lusting for others, and God hates it no matter what a homosexual would like to think. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet (Rom 1:26-27)." Lusting for what someone else possesses, or material things, is not good because it brings unnecessary discontentment and unhappiness into our lives.

Pride causes people to condemn others by the elevating of themselves and by the demeaning of those that they judge. Pride is self-righteousness, and self-righteousness is a problem experienced by all men and is not confined only to people who practice religion. The late English divine Thomas Adams once wrote, "*Self-righteousness is the devil's masterpiece to make us think well of ourselves.*" (B3) Pride is responsible for almost all of the bad treatment of others. "...Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (James 4:6)."

Lying is only used when the truth is not good enough for our situation. Lying usually takes place when we have done something that we should not have done or when we do not have the conviction to stand up and confess the truth. The moral of the story is to always do what we are supposed to and to stand up for the truth.

Murder is terrible for any cause - especially if we put ourselves on the receiving end of the deed.

Stealing is a lack of respect for others, their property, and a lack of faith in God for provision.

Cheating at anything is evil, especially if it is infidelity in marriage. Cheating destroys trust and is a major downfall in many relationships.

Malice only brings unhappiness to the victim. If we do commit malice against someone, we would only have to put ourselves in the victim's shoes for a moment, and we

would condemn our own selves as evil.

It should be easy to understand, if we think about it, how just God is in condemning us to hell, especially since most of us only want mercy if it is on our own terms. We are like a death row inmate that would turn down a pardon because the inmate does not want to give up the lifestyle he has become accustomed to in prison.

The seventeenth century English divine Richard Baxter once made this profound statement on sin, *“Use sin as it will use you; spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murderer of the world: use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you. You love not death; love not the cause of death.”* (B3)

Carnal Pleasure is when a man gives into the lusts of the flesh for the desires of the world that distract man from serving God. Carnality derives from the lust for pleasures that are desirable to the flesh and eyes. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world (I Jn 2:16).”

Many activities, that seem innocent to the eye, are really desires that feed the flesh and not the spirit. Any activity that does not have to do with God’s kingdom is of the flesh. Since all things are lawful to the believer, a man can partake of non-sinful things of the world; however, extreme caution must be used because these activities rarely help God’s kingdom and often lead to sin or even a lukewarm life.

~ The Commandments ~

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

There is one thing that you will find for certain when examining the modern Christian world and that is you would be hard pressed to find a professor of Christ that is willing to apply the scripture to his life. There always appears to be a thousand excuses why we should not apply God's Word to our lives and very few reasons why we can or should. I find it difficult to understand that so many people choose to ignore the commandments of God when obedience to God is the one biblical theme that is most prevalent in the scripture - and in fact, it is more prevalent than all other themes combined.

If we search the scripture, we will see that God's plan has never changed from the very beginning. God's plan for salvation has always been through faith and that plan has never wavered. Like God's plan of faith, man's duty to God has never changed, which is obedience to God and His Word; and no matter how many people want to split hairs over doctrines such as grace, faith, imputed righteousness, and predestination, our duty remains the same: Absolute obedience to God and His word - anything less is a deception of Satan. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Eccl 12:13)."

For a man to please God, it is critical for him to understand what God expects from him as believer, so if he is not meeting God's commandments, he should have

serious concern about the status of his faith and conversion. “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked (I Jn 2:3-6).”

The Christian commandments are many, so I will not mention all of them; however, I would like to touch upon the Christian’s principal duties:

- Attend to the spiritual and not the carnal: Walk in the Spirit
- Repentance & Baptism
- Believe God’s Word & glorify God in all that we do
- Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17) - honoring the Sabbath is so man can rest from physical laboring to help him in spiritual renewal
- Resist all negative and sinful thought
- Forgive others - do not condemn people - never seek vengeance
- Be humble & meek - exercise the Fruits of the Spirit
- Communion & Foot Washing
- Pay our first 10% net income in tithes to God & to help others
- Love our fellow man & do unto others as we would have them do unto us

Many people today believe that because the scripture is adamant that we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves but a gift of God, we should not even try to be a doer of the word because that would be our works. It is true that it is impossible for us to ever be a doer of the word except by the grace and power of God. However, just because the scripture states that we are

saved by grace does not mean that we can deny the rest of God's Word. A true believer will not continue to partake of the world because God's spirit is inside of him. We can talk-the-talk all we want, but God requires us to walk-the-walk. There is an old African proverb that says, "*Your deeds speak so loudly to me that I cannot hear what words you say.*" (B1) The Holy Scripture echoes a similar message – "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ... (John 14:21)."

There are some people who believe that keeping God's commandments is legalism, and if this is the case, then the Lord Jesus Christ is a legalist. "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments (Matt 19:17)." "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matt 12:50)." "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3)." Notice that Christ taught that we must not only believe, but we must also repent and keep God's commandments.

Even the Apostles were legalist according to many modern Christians that only choose to believe a portion of the scripture. "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance (Acts 26:20)." "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19)." "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (James 2:24). But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves (James 1:22)."

All believers are aware that keeping the commandments of God is only possible by faith and by Christ working in us; however, there are not many people who realize that it is only by our unbelief and by our resisting of the Holy Spirit that we fail to keep the commandments of God.

~ Holy Bible ~

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

There are many different Bible versions out today; however, the only one that can be recommended is the King James Version (KJV). The translation of the KJV is superior due to the fact that the original person that translated most of it was filled with the Holy Spirit and was superior in translation skills: William Tyndale.

William Tyndale was responsible for interpreting the majority of the King James Bible with about 90% of his translation being used word-for-word in the KJV. We may hear some make false statements like: "*The King James Version is not a good translation because the original Greek said...*" When translating the scripture, Mr. Tyndale took into account that the men of God in the Bible were Hebrew and there was not always a good Greek word to translate the original Hebrew words these godly men must have used. So when translating the scripture, William Tyndale considered the Hebrew words and phrases that would have been used by our Lord and His apostles, and I do not believe that any other translator of the scripture has ever done this. William Tyndale also understood that all of the New Testament doctrines can be taken back to the Old Testament, so he compared the New Testament Greek to the original Old Testament Hebrew to ensure that nothing was lost in the translation. If this

were not enough, beauty alone justifies the King James Version as the best translation, for if we stop and observe nature for a brief moment, we would see that the work of God's hands has always been with beauty beyond comparison.

Tyndale, for no gain to himself, translated the scripture into English from the original languages while fully understanding the Papists would kill him if they could get their hands on him. William Tyndale was burnt at the stake by the Catholic Church in the year 1536 AD. The Papist deemed that Tyndale was worthy of death because he translated the Bible into English and because he used God's Word solely, and not church doctrine, to teach the people the true gospel of Christ.

Mr. Tyndale held the belief and hope that if the common man had the scripture in his own language, the church and the priest could no longer extort or trick society for their own sinful gain. William Tyndale's work was not in vain, for once the Holy Bible made its way to the people in their own language, liberty soon followed throughout the English world. Mr. Tyndale's work was truly inspired by God, and I believe that if anyone will take the time to appreciate the eloquence of William Tyndale's translation, they will realize that it was God who worked through him - for no other literary work known to man can compare to its beauty of language.

Part IV: The Outcome

*“Nothing exposes religion more to
the reproach of its enemies than the worldliness
and hard-heartedness of its professors.”*

English Divine - Matthew Henry, 1662-1714 (B3)

29

~ The Reward ~

1 Corinthians 2:9

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man, the things
which God hath prepared for them that love him.

I can recall myself as a small child awaiting anxiously for Christmas morning because it was so exciting and wonderful knowing that Santa Claus was coming with so many presents. I remember those days with much affection, and I fondly recall them whenever something draws my mind back to my childhood. Many times I have felt that same innocent childlike wonder since Jesus saved me, yet I know that no matter how many wonderful events may happen in my life, nothing will even begin to compare to what God has waiting for His children.

There are many personal rewards for being a Christian in this world without even considering all of the wonderful things God has waiting for us. While it is true there will still be trials and tribulations after a person becomes a Christian, the joy and peace alone that Christ gives us makes being a true believer more wonderful than an unbeliever can even imagine.

It is an exciting thought, like the verse above tells us, that we can not even conceive how wonderful heaven is! I believe this verse alone allows me not to dwell on the subject of reward any longer. For, if I have already experienced great joy and happiness in this world, how much greater is heaven when I cannot even imagine how wonderful it will be?

30

~ The Damned ~

Matthew 13:41-42

The Son of man shall send forth his angels,
and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things
that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast
them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing
and gnashing of teeth.

If we search the scripture, it should not take long for us to discover that God is a just God, and He will punish man for committing sin and refusing His salvation. As I mentioned earlier, the scripture teaches us that man cannot imagine how wonderful heaven is, which is wonderful if we stop and think about it. Yet, I am deeply saddened by the fact that the majority of mankind are headed towards a punishment that they cannot fathom how horrible it will be.

Can you truly imagine being damned?

Can you see yourself standing before the throne of God on judgment day?

You are standing before the throne of God on that much dreaded judgment day, and there are great masses of people weeping with screams of torment everywhere. All around you are your friends and family quaking, trembling, and staggering at the feet of an Almighty God while the books of heaven are opened. Every shame after most embarrassing shame that you were ever guilty of is replayed for all to watch while you squirm and vigorously search for some place to hide your most heinous and

sinful person. But the only place you could ever find that could protect you from your own perversions and shame is the blood of Jesus, whom you rejected your entire life while living on this earth for a few lusts of the flesh.

As the scenes of your life play on to torment and embarrass you before your loved ones and all of mankind, you search even more desperately for a place to hide, until your panic is so great you are beside yourself. You witness the lies that you told, and the adultery you committed. You witness the cheating, the ill thoughts of others, the stealing, and the prideful thoughts that you were better than others. You see your hurtful treatment of the people you dealt with, your lusting, and your pompous belief that you were a good person while most of the thoughts you had your entire life were looking down on others while elevating yourself. And as if this were not enough, every single shameful and sinful thing that you have ever done, or thought of, comes up before God and all of mankind to shame and antagonize you.

Then the most horrid of all the events of your life comes upon you, more horrid than any human mind could ever imagine: The Almighty God passes judgment upon you. And while you wait for what you know is the most atrocious torments of hell, paralyzing fear takes hold of your entire being. You then realize that you have joined the masses with great weeping, screams, and convulsions of terror.

An angel of the Lord then sweeps you off of your feet, and he casts you into the great inferno. And as you are tumbling downwards into the black abyss of unbearable heat, you cry out for mercy, but your voice cannot be heard over the screams of torment by the masses in Hell. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15)."

The Almighty, He is so merciful, for He has allowed you to look out over time to the great judgment day, and while you are still on this earth, He is pleading with you to repent and pursue Him with all of your might and soul. So please, take the time to seek out your salvation with all of your energy, for salvation is the only important thing

that you will ever need to attain in your lifetime.

31

~ Backsliding ~

Hebrews 6:4-6

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

I have failed to directly mention the backsliding Christian up to this point, so if you are one, I hope you humble yourself and listen to what I have to say. If major backsliding has occurred, you were most likely never fully converted and remain unsaved; because as the verse above tells us, it is not possible for a child of God to seriously backslide (completely fall away) if he has been born-again.

A man who has substantially backslid was never fully justified by faith, for some sin, circumstance, or pleasure of the world prevented justification from being realized. But please do not confuse an occasional sin with a return of one's life into continual sin, for if a man is converted and he is sincerely trying to walk in the spirit, what little sin that is manifested in his life is not counted against him. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom 8:1)."

Many people, who have practiced Christianity for a

long period of time, may have noticed that their drive and desire towards Christ has waned, and the excitement is no longer present in their daily walk with Jesus. Most people do not realize that the reason their initial walk with Christ was so full of happiness is because they spent all of their time seeking, praising, and trying to be obedient to the Lord. After a period of time, many seekers let the things of the world begin to take priority in their lives, and they begin neglecting and compromising their spiritual walk with God just as the Parable of the Sower states. This neglect and compromising is what destroys the wonderful feeling and zeal of being a new Christian, and many times it prevents the seeker from realizing salvation. God will not share the heart of the believer with sin or the world.

If someone does desire a renewed relationship with Christ, let him rededicate his life to God by seeking Him with all of his soul and energy while trying his best to live for a better world every minute of the day; and the joy and happiness he experienced before in his relationship with God will eventually return. A person must be careful to continue in his walk with Christ until after he has been truly converted; otherwise, he will eventually backslide again.

God will never call the sinner to repentance twice, as the verse listed at the beginning of this section tells us, for this would be crucifying Christ afresh. Because God does not call the sinner to repentance a second time, once the backslider has deceived himself into living in a sinful and carnal state, it is up to him to realize his spiritual perverseness and seek God with all his might. American Clergyman William Nevins once made this insightful statement, *“There are two kinds of repentance: one is that of Judas, the other that of Peter; the one is ice broken, the other ice melted. Repentance unto life will be repentance in the life.”* (B3)

A method to discover, or rediscover, a fulfilling relationship with God that proved successful in years gone by was introduced by the original Methodists. The original Methodists did not initially prescribe to a different doctrine that inspired people to call them

“Methodists,” but rather, the original Methodists followed a rigid schedule in their daily lives that made them appear to have devised a method for going to heaven. The established religions of the day thought these *“Methodists”* were trusting in their method to get them to heaven instead of trusting in the grace of God.

The claim that the Methodists believed that their devised method could get them to heaven without God’s grace was false. But rather, the Methodists of those days did realize that if God commanded man to take communion, to pray, to witness, and to study the scripture, et cetera, then perhaps they should create for themselves, and adhere to, a rigid daily schedule full of Christian activities to help assist them in being obedient to God’s Word. Because the scripture teaches that being obedient to God is a vital evidence of faith, the early Methodist not only followed their “method” very devotedly, they also followed the commandments of God very vigorously.

In fact, the adhering to God’s commandments and the prescribing to this method was so successful, the original Methodists became responsible for one of the greatest revivals of all time: The Great Awakening. The Great Awakening owed its biggest debt to the Evangelist, and Methodist, the Reverend George Whitefield.

~ The Ministry ~

Mark 16:15

And he said unto them, *Go ye into all the world,
and preach the gospel to every creature.*

In my reflecting on the condition of the church, I realize that there are not enough true believers that are willing to work for the Lord and further His kingdom while the devil has many people furthering his cause. Most people in the churches today appear to have more time to watch some television show or to partake of the world than they do to lift one finger to further God's kingdom. If the Lord had only a handful of dedicated men and women that were endued with power-from-on-high like in the book of Acts, He could shake this world to its very foundation.

I believe if more people truly understood that God expects them to use the gifts that He has given them for His kingdom, there would be more people in the church working for the Lord. While it is true that not all people are called to be preachers or evangelists, God has created everyone with some purpose in mind that will further His kingdom. Even if a person's ministry is as simple as handing out Bibles at a college or fliers on the street, God can use more workers. In Mathew 25:14-30, God is adamant that man must take what gifts God has given him and use it to further His kingdom, and if he does not, man will be punished. Everyone should read the above mentioned Bible passage and understand that God truly desires that all believers have some kind of ministry to

help further His kingdom. In contributing to God's Kingdom, a believer must ensure that his ministry is in the Lord's will and does not violate the scripture. I have seen many church groups that allow women preachers - openly denying the word of God. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Tim 2:11-14)."

A good ministry for the body of existing believers is very important for the church to have; however, when it comes to going outside of the church walls to reach the Lord's lost sheep, most churches fail miserably by waiting for the sinner to show up on their doorstep. "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23)."

The church body has many different needs to be met, and everyone can contribute in some manner. However, a believer should not begin an advanced ministry such as preaching until after he has been converted with extensive biblical studying under his belt. A believer should also not begin an advanced ministry until he is certain that God is calling him into that field.

To find out what ministry God has in mind for us, we can study God's Word with a sincere heart, fast, and pray, and God will reveal His will for our lives. The Lord will leave little doubt in our mind as to what our ministry should be because he will place a strong desire within our heart to fulfill His will.

33

~ Divine Healing ~

John 5:14

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

In the last 100 years, divine healings have dramatically increased. In an attempt to discover what has caused the increase in healings, I have studied the differences in beliefs and circumstances of the time periods.

I have concluded that the reason divine healings have been so numerous this century compared to those in the past is due to the fact that the concept of divine healing was brought to the forefront in Christian teaching, and the people believed in it. While there are many phony faith healers today, if we study Pentecostal church history, we will find that there have been numerous undeniable miraculous healings this century, especially in the first sixty five years.

Our Lord, great and merciful in his suffering, has provided more than salvation for us. Although salvation alone is such a wonderful gift we could never begin to repay Him, He has also provided a way for us to be healed from all manner of illness if we can only believe. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Pet 2:24).” If someone is sick and they do believe in divine healing, a believer can lay his hands on the sick person and pray, and the scripture tells

us “they shall recover.” “...They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover (Mark 16:18).” While all prayer helps the afflicted, the laying on of hands is the method prescribed by the scripture.

All sickness, disease, and death are caused by sin; however, the Lord allows it occasionally to test or better a believer such as Job. Before the fall in the Garden of Eden, sickness, disease, and death was not a part of man’s life, but due to Adam’s original sin and our own sin, we are now inflicted with sickness, disease, and death. A good book on this subject is “*Christ the Healer*,” by F. F. Bosworth.

Something to keep in mind is that if we pray believing that God can and will heal us, it would be impossible for God not to do so; otherwise, God would be a liar. To experience the power of God, we must hold God to the promises that He has made to us in His Holy Bible. To boldly approach the throne of God means that God wants us to hold Him to His word. We must approach God reminding Him, without faith wavering, that He gave the promise therefore He is duty bound to keep His Word. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (I-Heb 4:16).”

We do not have to worry about whether we have enough faith for God to work a miracle in our life or in the life of someone we are praying for, for all we have to believe is that God is capable of working the miracle desired. If a man would like to increase his faith that he may be healed, he can sincerely and fully repent before God and walk-in-the-spirit, and his faith will increase proportionately; so even Death and the grave can be conquered!

I John 3:22

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him,
because we keep his commandments, and do those things
that are pleasing in his sight.

34

~ All Things Are Possible ~

Mark 9:23

...If thou canst believe,
all things are possible to him that believeth.

Throughout the years, many false teachers have taught that God no longer performs miracles, that miracles were for the Apostles and not for us today, and that baptism of the Holy Spirit was only for the people in the Bible. "...In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (2 Tim 3:1-5)."

Do not be confused, it is not the church that performs miracles - it is God in His church that performs miracles; so if we believe that miracles can no longer happen, we deny the very power of the God we claim to worship. The real reason that God rarely works wonders amongst the church is that the people's faith is weak, so they try and claim that God no longer works miracles when in reality they cannot humble themselves and be obedient to God long enough for Him to work through their lives. If we choose not to believe God can and will perform miracles in our lives, the Lord never will. The dead raised, the sick healed, and the seas parted are not wonders confined to

some age long ago, but these are works of faith possible even today by God through His believing children. "...The things which are impossible with men are possible with God (Luke 18:27)."

One of the most detrimental beliefs that prevents the church from realizing the power of God, one that kills faith and one that I find unusually strange, is that there are many teachers who make excuses why we will always continue to sin in this world. And there are others who falsely teach that we can never be perfected in this lifetime - not even considering that we serve an Almighty God. Can you imagine anyone claiming that the work of the devil was more powerful than the work of Christ? And that God cannot perfect someone in this world-what perversion!

History shows that three people have obtained perfection by wholly yielding to God's Spirit: Christ, Enoch, and Elijah; and all three transfigured. While some of us may not be able to overcome the world and obtain perfection, we would sell ourselves very short if we did not at least live our lives attempting with all of our might to meet the Lord's call to perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt 5:48)." Instead of continuing in a life of sin and justifying it, we should stand on the promises of God ensuring us the power to overcome this world. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil 4:13)."

We can be assured - if a man strives for anything less than perfection, he will never attain anything that even closely resembles it. We may also be assured that if we believe in a God who cannot overcome this world, raise the dead, or heal the sick using our vessels, we will perish in our sins without ever experiencing the true power of an Almighty God. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (I Jn 5:3-4)."

If there is anyone who sincerely believes that God is not capable of perfecting a believer while he lives on this earth, I believe they should study the scripture a little

more closely. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 Jn 3:2-8).”

~ Hallowed Ground ~

Exodus 3:5

...Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,
for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

I have learned that even though I have experienced conversion, God will still hide His sweet presence from me if I take part in sin or carnal desires. For God will not allow anything rebellious or sinful to remain in His presence, even with the atonement; and this is why true conversion and the believer's sanctification are so critical.

I have discovered over the years that when I attend only to the spirit, God does display His power in my life. I have also found that when my mind is single, I do experience first hand God's very presence. And having experienced a true relationship with God, I have learned that He will never reveal Himself to anyone out in midst of the carnal world - nor will He in sin. For there is only one place that God will make Himself known unto the hearts and minds of men and that place is on Hallowed Ground.

Forty years in the desert, God used to sanctify Moses and to bring him to His holy ground - Mt. Sinai; so Moses could meet the Lord and begin experiencing a personal relationship with Him. Like Moses, we all have access to our own Mt. Sinai and to our own holy ground, but we can only enter into the Lord's holy place through faith, repentance, and the blood of Christ - for nothing defiled can ever go there.

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

36

~ A Personal Call ~

1 Corinthians 15:34

Awake to righteousness, and sin not...

I mentioned earlier that no one can ever earn their redemption from sin. The reason no one can merit their salvation is because the cost of redemption is a sinless life lived without a single sin having been committed, which no one but Christ could ever achieve. And though it is very important to understand that no one can ever earn their redemption, it would be misleading if I did not mention that there is a price for salvation and that price is one's heart. Just as a marriage can never be successful without both parties giving their hearts to one another, the same applies for a relationship with Christ.

The Lord gave His life for us, and He only expects that we give our souls to Him in return. And if we do give Christ our hearts, consequently our lives will follow. Anyone who has given their soul to Christ will undoubtedly live solely for Him. God honors only one sacrifice of man and that is the offering of a sincere obedient heart. "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways (Ps 119:2-3)."

I would now like to put forth a dilemma to you. What are you willing to exchange for your salvation - a few short moments of elusive pleasure? What pleasures can you possibly experience that would be worthy of spending an

eternity in the pit of Hell? “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works (Matt 16:26-27).”

What will it be?

Will it be forever in God’s paradise or an eternity in the lake of fire?

Your clock is ticking - the sand of your life’s hour glass is slipping away.

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa 55:6-7).”

Thousands of men, women, and children die every single day with billions of them now waiting in the grave for God to call them back to life for final judgment.

How many of these people put off their salvation until it was too late?

How many religious people believed that they were saved, but their lives never fully manifested it?

And how many are there of the dead who would now give anything, even a thousand lifetimes, to make it right with God?

Before your time runs out, I beg of you: please do not tarry in sin for one moment longer. Repent and go to God; for His heart is broken by your iniquity, and His hands and feet are pierced through with your sin. All day long the Lord pleads with us to consider His way. So please, go to God - for He now awaits you, upon His Hallowed Ground.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Bibliography

1. *Ault*, GATHERED TOGETHER.. (Page 147, 169, 171)
Mowbray & Co. LTD. 1933. London & Oxford
 2. *Dalimore*, GEORGE WHITEFIELD: THE LIFE AND
TIMES OF THE GREAT EVANGELIST OF THE
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY REVIVAL (VOLUME 1: Page
120). Banner of Truth Trust. 1989. Carlisle, PA
 3. *Edwards, D. D.*, NEW DICTIONARY OF THOUGHTS.
Standard Book Co. 1955. New York, NY.
 4. *Fant & Pinson*, 20 CENTURIES OF GREAT PREACHING.
VOLUME THREE: WESLEY TO FINNEY – GEORGE
WHITEFIELD (Page 110). Word Books, Publisher. 1971.
Waco, TX
 5. GIANTS OF THE FAITH. Back to the Bible – Good News
Broadcasting Assoc., Inc. 1996. Lincoln, NE
 6. *Sargent*, FRANKLIN’S SELECT WORKS (Page 412—413).
Phillips, Sampson & Co. 1854. Boston, MA
 7. *Sugden*, THE STANDARD SERMONS OF JOHN
WESLEY—VOLUME 1 (Page 61—64). Epworth Press.
1955. London
 8. *Wesley*, THE HEART OF WESLEY’S JOURNAL (Page 43).
Kregel Publications. 1989. Grand Rapids, MI
- * **All scriptural quotes have been taken from the King
James Version of the Bible.**

Available Soon

Musings:
The Philosophy of God

By

Michael Dean Taylor

www.lulu.com/browse

Coming in 2008

Seven Thunders: The Mystery of God
By Michael Dean Taylor

