

WARNINGS TO CHRISTIANS

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on August 16, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

The Bible does not teach that once a man becomes a child of God he is saved eternally. But the scriptures time and again warn us of the possibility of falling away from the Lord. And we need to study these scriptures for our own good. It is so easy for us to become careless or to allow the things of the world to claim our attention and draw us away from the Lord. In I Cor. 10:12, the apostle Paul said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." In Hebrews 3:12, Paul said, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief; in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if ye hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end."

In Luke 10 we read the story of Jesus sending out seventy disciples on one occasion, and he gave them authority over evil spirits and tread upon serpents, and they returned and rejoiced because the spirits were subject unto them. And the Lord Jesus said, "Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." In Rev. 20:15, we read, "If any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." In Rev. 3:5, in his letter to the church at Sardis, "He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life." Now these scriptures teach that the Christian, the child of God, has his name written in the book of life. But the Bible also reaches that he can become careless and indifferent and be led back into the world, into the service of Satan and be lost. In Exodus 32:32-33, we read about Israel sinning against God in the wilderness. And Moses interceded for the people and asked the Lord to "forgive their sin--and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." But the Lord answered, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." And that is true today. We cannot say that such people were always hypocrites, because the Lord would not make a mistake and enroll a man's name on the Lamb's book of life who is a hypocrite. And even the Lord could not rub a man's name out unless it was first written there. But the Lord is warning us that even after our names have been written in heaven, we can become careless, we can allow the things of the world to draw us away and the Lord will blot out our name from his book.

In John 15:1-7, Jesus talks about the vine and the branches. And in this he is also warning of the possibility of Christians falling away from the Lord. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word which was spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me he can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that he bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples." Although we are branches in the true vine, if we do not abide there, if we do not bear fruits to God's glory, we are as the useless branch, cut off and burned. So the Christian can be severed from the Lord and he lost.

him know, that he that convereth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." Now all these scriptures teach us that a man can be restored to the grace of God and the fellowship of the church, once he falls away from the Lord if he will repent and ask God to forgive him. We should not read these with the idea of being encouraged to do that which is wrong, but we should read them for the comfort that they give to us.

When a man becomes a Christian through obedience to the gospel, the Bible teaches that all his past sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb." (Acts 22: 16.) The apostle Peter speaks of them as his old sins. "II Pet. 1:9.) The Lord never remembers them again. The Bible talks about them as being blotted out. (Acts 3:19.) When you erase what you have written on a blackboard it is gone and gone forever. You may put something else there that looks like it, but you cannot put back what you have erased. And so it is when the Lord forgives us. When we are baptized into Christ, our souls are washed in the blood of the Lamb and he remembers these sins against us no more forever, and if we are lost in the end it will be because of sins that we have committed after we have become Christians. That we can sin after we become Christians we know from the scriptures that we have read. That is why he put these scriptures in the Bible, to warn us of the danger of being led back into the world and falling away and being lost. And we read these scriptures to encourage Christians when they sin to confess their sins and ask God to forgive them.

I would emphasize that these scriptures are particularly addressed to the Christian. The Christian has this privilege but the man who is not a Christian does not. The man who is a Christian can call upon God as his Father as well as his God. The man who is not a Christian cannot call upon God as his Father. He may think of him as his Creator, but not as his Father. And he cannot approach the throne of God as a son calling upon his Father asking for mercy and for forgiveness. Furthermore, the Christian can approach the throne of God through the Lord Jesus Christ who is his great high priest. (Heb. 9:24.) No man can approach the court of heaven in his own name, in the name of another man, or upon the merits of anything that he has done or not done. We can only approach the throne of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus is the one high priest at God's right hand making intercessions for God's people. (Rom. 8:34.) When the Christian sins, if he sincerely repents of his sins and comes to God through Christ, the Lord Jesus, our high priest will plea our case in the court of heaven and the Lord promises to forgive us. (John 2:1.) Sometimes a man will say, "That is one reason I am not a Christian. I am just afraid that I can not hold out." Well, the Lord knows that none of us can live a perfect life, that we are all subject to temptations every day. And he knows that we will stumble along the way and make mistakes and that is why he has provided this means for the Christians to be restored. It is a blessed privilege that we ought to appreciate and think about seriously and one that we ought to take advantage of often. And that is why we ought to pray, "Father, forgive us of our sins."

In Luke 15, we have the beautiful story of the prodigal son. There are many lessons that might be drawn from this wonderful story, but one particularly that we are interested in with respect to this lesson, is how the father received the son. One of the boys wanted to leave home and he asked the father to give him his portion of the inheritance and the father granted the request. And then he went off and spent what he had in riotous living. And finally after he has spent all and lost all of his friends, he found himself feeding pigs for a living. And when he began to think about himself, no friends, no money, far away from home, just about starved to death, living in rags and filth, he thought about his father's house. He said to himself, "How many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough...and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be

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called thy son: Make me as one of thy hired servants." But the father saw him far down the road and ran to meet him. He put his arms around him and kissed him and welcomed him home. He commanded that a ring be put on his hand, and shoes on his feet, indicating that he would be received home as a son and not as a servant. He killed the fatted calf and made merry because "this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found." I think that story is intended to teach us how God will receive us after we allow the devil to lead us away from God, we are allured back into the world by the things of this life, and we come to realize what a fool we have played and how we have wasted our opportunities in sin or in the service of Satan. When we say, "I am going back, and I will tell God that I have sinned against him." The Lord is simply telling us that he will receive us back. We do not have to plead with God to get him in a notion to receive us. God is always ready to receive those who will return to him, ready as the father received his son back home.

THE STORY OF NAAMAN

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 17, 1960 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

The apostle Paul tells us that the things written aforetime were written for our learning. He had reference, of course, to the things that were written in the Old Testament scriptures. Today I want to draw some lessons from an interesting story found in the fifth chapter of Second Kings. In order that it might be fresh on your minds as we study together, I am going to read a part of this story.

"Now Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone away in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would that my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria? then would he recover him of his leprosy. And went in and told his lord saying, Thus and thus saith the maiden that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man does send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? But consider I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

"And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shall be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the 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 servant came near and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing wouldest thou nothave 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 the 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."

There are two or three characters in this story that we want to talk about today. The first one is Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Syria. He was a great man with his master, according to this record, an honorable man. And God had given him victory in battle. He was spoken of as a mighty man of valor. But he was a leper. And because of this he suffered humiliation and perhaps to some degree loss of prestige among his fellowmen. All of the honors that had been bestowed upon him meant very little to him. For what value are all of these honors so long as he is cursed with the deadly disease of leprosy? The story reminds us of an artist who might paint a beautiful picture, a masterpiece, and then by one stroke of the brush across the face of the picture destroy it. And the story is so

often repeated among us today. Sometimes people will speak of a certain man, describe him in glowing terms as a good citizen, one who is interested in the civic affairs in his community, perhaps a great soldier, a man of wealth and honor, a successful business man, but he is not a Christian. For as Naaman's body was cursed with leprosy, so this man's soul is cursed with a deadly disease. Sin is a more devastating disease, brings more shame and dishonor and disgrace than leprosy ever did.

Now the second character is the little Jewish maiden. She was a captive out of the land of Israel and she served in the house of Naaman and waited on Naaman's wife. One day she made the remark, "Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy." This little girl had doubtless been reared by a father and mother who feared God. She knew about the man of God in Israel; she believed he could heal Naaman. Furthermore, she did not show resentment against her enemy who had taken her from her father's house and from her native land and made her serve as a slave in his home. I think we can say that her home training is now reflected in her life. It is interesting how often we read about young people in the Bible like this little Jewish maiden whose name is not given. There was little Joseph and Daniel, David and Samuel, Mariam and others--bright shining stars on the pages of God's word. It should be of a great deal of interest to all young people and boys and girls to know that God will recognize your service and your faithfulness as well as those who are much older than you. Fathers and mothers also should know that the training in the home will be early reflected in the lives of these sons and daughters. This little maiden had doubtless come from a good home, a home that loved and feared God. She was somewhat like Joseph who had been stolen from his home and was made to serve as a slave in the house of Potiphar and then later he served a term in prison before he became the great man in Egypt. But wherever Joseph found himself, regardless of the circumstances, he always made the most of it and he served God regardless of the circumstances. While he was a servant in Potiphar's house he was so faithful until he knew more about Potiphar's house than Potiphar did himself. When he was thrown in prison he made such a good prisoner until the jailor practically turned the jail over to Joseph. I think that is a wonderful lesson for all of us, that we should always remember to serve the Lord and do what is right and serve him to the very best of our ability regardless of the circumstances in which we might find ourselves. So this little Jewish maiden, far away from home, in a strange land among strange people, a people who had stolen her from her father's house and perhaps had destroyed her father's house, did not show resentment, but she was anxious to do what she could to help Naaman be recovered of his leprosy. And so she told him about the man of God in Samaria.

The next character that immediately comes upon the scene is the king of Samaria. For some reason Naaman was sent to the king of Samaria. The king thought that the king of Syria was seeking to start a war with him and so he asked, "Am I God, to kill and make alive?" Implying he could do that as quickly as he could heal a man of leprosy. The mistake here was that Naaman was sent to the wrong authority. The little maiden did not say that the king of Samaria could heal Naaman of his leprosy; she said the prophet of God in Samaria could heal him of his leprosy. Naaman simply went to the wrong place to get healed. But the same mistake is made by people today. They go to the wrong authority. People who are trying to learn what they must do to become Christians, how to serve God and to go to heaven when they die, go to the wrong authority. Sometimes they go to the law of Moses to find the answer and, of course, it is not there. Sometimes they go to the creeds of men, but of course, the answer is not found there. These, like the king of Samaria, cannot heal or make alive. And as he could not heal Naaman of his leprosy, so these authorities cannot save a soul from sin. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can save our souls. Let us go to him and to him alone for the correct answer.

The king should have known about the prophet in Israel. From the very beginning of the history of Israel, God had intended that the king should know the law of God and that he should rule his people according to the law of God. But these kings had long ago forgotten the Lord and they had long ago forgotten the law of the Lord and the people now worshipped idols. It is unfortunate for any people when the rulers of the land are godless men, men who do not fear God, and men who through selfish interests practice deceitful tactics and encourage others to do so. Solomon said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

About this time Elisha sent word to the king of Samaria and said, "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes, let him come now to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the door of the house of Elisha, and Elisha sent a message unto him saying, Go wash in the Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come unto thee and thou shall be clean. ~~But Naaman was wroth and went away and said, Behold, I thought he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of Jehovah his God and wave his hand over the place and recover the leper. Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel, may I not wash in them and be cleansed? But his servant said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather than to wash and be clean?"~~ And he went down and dipped himself seven times and he was healed of his leprosy. Naaman reminds us of a great many people today. People who from this source and that source pick up a little here and yonder and then come to conclude that the way they should be saved is this way or that way. And when they read from God's word the terms of salvation as laid down in the gospel, they, like Naaman, sometimes go away angry. Naaman was willing to take his leprosy back home because the man did not heal him like he thought he ought to be healed. He, no doubt, on the way to the prophet's house thought a great deal about what was going to happen, but the prophet did not so much as come out of the house and honor him. The prophet simply sent a servant out and said, "Go down to the river Jordan and dip seven times and you will be healed." And Naaman said, "Surely I thought he would come out and wave his hand over the place and call upon his God and heal the leprosy." And you know, that is the trouble with so many people today. They do not read the Bible as they ought to, and they come to the conclusion that this is the way God is going to save their souls. And when they find out what the Bible teaches on a subject they get angry and act as though they had rather take their sins and go on to hell rather than to do what God has commanded. It is not a matter of attracting attention to the public in what we do in serving God; it is not a matter of how big we are or how little we are in the eyes of the people; ~~it is simply a matter of doing what God tells us to do,~~ and if God tells us to stand on our heads, if that will take us to heaven, then we ought to do our best to obey the Lord.

Naaman also reminds us of some people who ridicule the idea of being baptized for the remission of sins. They tell us that it is not necessary to be baptized, that a man can go to heaven and never be baptized, although the Lord commanded us to be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38) But Naaman had to dip seven times in the river to be cleansed of his leprosy. He never would have been cleansed had he refused to obey the commands of the prophet. 'And if the Lord would not heal this man of his leprosy in his disobedience, why do men think God will save a soul when he refuses to obey God today? I do not know how far Naaman had to go before he came to the Jordan river in order to dip seven times, but I do know that he made the journey and dipped himself seven times before he was healed. Not because there was any virtue in the water in the Jordan, but because God had offered him cleansing on this condition. Just as Naaman had to meet God's condition in order to be cleansed, so people today must meet his condition to be baptized after they have believed on the Lord and repented of their sins, if they wish to be forgiven of their sins and to be saved eternally.

THE CHURCH: THE KINGDOM AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on September 6, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

In Paul's address to the Elders of Ephesus he said, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus built his church, (Matt. 16: 18) purchased it with his blood, died for it and is the Savior of his church. (Eph. 5: 22, 23). In the Bible it is sometimes called the body of Christ, sometimes the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, sometimes the house of God and the temple of God. Someone might ask, "How can the church be all of these things at the same time?" Well, sometimes we call a man a white man and also at the same time an American and a farmer. When we speak of his race we call him a white man, when we talk about his nationality we call him an American, and with reference to his vocation he is a farmer. And so it is with the church. When the Bible speaks of the church as a government it is called the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God; with reference to organization and unity it is called the body of Christ. When the Bible speaks of the church as a habitation of God in the Spirit, it is called the temple of God, and with reference to their relationship to the world, God's people are simply called the church.

Now we cannot speak of all of these in one lesson, but this morning we do want to speak of two or three of these features of the church. In Matt. 16: 18, Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Here the Lord uses the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" and the word "church" interchangeably. In other words, he is telling us that the church is the kingdom and the kingdom of heaven is the church. Furthermore, we know that they are the same because they have the same laws of induction. The same thing that will put a man in the church will also put him into the kingdom of heaven. The same laws that will put a man into the kingdom will also put him into the church of the Lord Jesus. In the statement we have read Jesus promised the keys of the kingdom to his apostles and on the day of pentecost the apostles used the keys of the kingdom to open the doors of the church. That is why we know that the church and the kingdom are the same. Furthermore, in the parable of the sower, Jesus said that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom, and when we sow the seed of the kingdom, the word of God, we plant the church. And that is the only way we can plant the church of the Lord throughout the world today, by sowing the seed of the kingdom, by preaching the gospel of Christ. Now these are some of the reasons why we know that the church is the kingdom and the kingdom is the church.

But the kingdom of heaven is a monarchy wherein the King rules supreme. He is the Judge and the Lawgiver. Christ is the king of the kingdom of heaven. He is our lawgiver; he will be our judge in the judgment day. The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus is reigning now and that he will deliver the kingdom to the Father when he returns. In I Cor. 15: 24, Paul said, "But then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, til he hath put all enemies under his feet. And the last enemy that shall be abolished is death."

The church, then is not a democracy wherein the people make their laws and govern themselves. Our state and national governments are representative forms of government and yet we call them democracy. But we elect men to represent us in

the government, and this they do, at least sometimes. But the church of the Lord Jesus is not a democracy. But some churches are conducted as though they were democracies. They make their own creeds and they revise them as often and when they think wise and best to do so according to the majority. But voting on an issue cannot make it right or make it wrong. If a thing is right it is right before they begin to vote on it; if it is wrong it is still wrong when they get through voting. In Col. 3: 17, Paul said, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Paul is saying that whatever we do in worship and service to God should be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our king, he rules supreme in his kingdom, and he is our lawgiver. Paul said, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

The church is also called the body of Christ. Not his physical body, of course, but the church is like his physical body. Christ is the head of the body, the church. Paul tells us this in Col. 1: 18. As the body is under the control of the head, so the church is under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. The hands and the feet do not each morning hold a conference and decide which way it will go or what they will do during the day. But the head directs the movements and the actions of the members of the body. Sometimes disease strikes the body and a member or members are paralyzed. This is also true with reference to some members of the church. Sin, as a disease, will destroy our relationship with the Lord. And when members are so severed from the Lord they become unruly and rebel against the authority of the Lord Jesus. Like a paralyzed member, they are no longer under the control of the Lord Jesus, but they run aimlessly, disregarding the word of God. Furthermore, as every member of the physical body responds in sympathy to one another, so it is in the church. You might strike your thumb with a hammer, and immediately every member of the body will respond in sympathy. Drop a heavy article upon one foot, mash it sorely, and the other foot will immediately assume the whole load in carrying the body. So should it be in the church. Christians, we are told, should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Even the proud eyes look down upon the humble feet and are glad when you put on a new pair of shoes. And so in the church the fortunate rejoice when others are blessed. There should be no envy or jealousy because one rides in a bigger automobile than another or lives in a better house than another, but rather, let us rejoice. Neither should some feel that they are better than others and with a somewhat snobbish attitude look down upon the less fortunate.

Furthermore, in the body, to each member a task is given. We do not walk with our hands, but with our feet. The liver cannot perform the duty of the heart, neither can the heart perform the duty of the liver. The eye cannot see for the ear and the ear cannot smell for the nose. But to each member God has given a task, and it is that way in the church. But sometimes we feel that our talents or our abilities are so small and insignificant that we are not worth much to the church. But God wants every member to perform his duty well. And if every member of the body of Christ will perform his duty well, then God's work will be done. There are some people preaching today who should be plowing, and there are some who are plowing who should be preaching. God has blessed certain ones with talents to preach his word or to carry on his work in certain fields, but instead of using that talent they are doing something else. And then the Lord has also blessed some men to do other works of the church, who are not particularly fitted to be preachers or to do visiting, etc., and they are trying to do what they are not fitted to do. What I am trying to say is that the Lord is teaching that every man has his particular place in the body of Christ. As the feet have their task, as the hands have theirs, so each member of the body of Christ is blessed with a task to do and given ability to do it.

Furthermore, the church, or God's people, are called simply the church. This word literally means "called out". It has reference to the relationship of the Christian to the world. God's people, therefore, are a called out people. They have by the gospel been called out of the world into the kingdom of God. Now the world, as it is used in the Bible in this respect, has reference to that part of the human race that is under the dominion of Satan. The Bible also calls Satan the prince of the world. Jesus said to his apostles (John 15: 18), "If the world hateth you, ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Now when he used the word world here, he had in mind exactly the same as when he said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." He was not talking about the earth: the ground, the rocks, the trees, the rivers, when he used the word world, but he was talking about that part of the human race that was following after Satan and in bondage to sin. The Lord loved men who were in sin, loved them so much that he gave his Son to die that they might be saved. And now he calls his people who have been-called out of Satan's kingdom or-called out of the world, the church. On the night that he was betrayed, he said, "I have given them thy word; and the world hateth them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17: 14). James said, "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore shall be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." (James 4: 4). And so the Lord is not only drawing that very clear distinction between his people and the people who serve Satan, but he is teaching us that we cannot be a friend of the world during the week and then serve God faithfully on the Lord's day. There must be a strong, clear, distinct line between God's people and those who serve Satan. Peter said, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possessions, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in times past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (I Pet. 2: 9-10). Now you see, God's people are "a called out people", separated from the world, called out of Satan's kingdom into the Lord's kingdom. John put it this way, in I John 2:15, "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 vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The apostle Paul also draws a very clear distinction between God's people and those who serve Satan in II Cor. 6: 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with iniquity? or what communion have light with darkness? And what concord have Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are the temple of the living God: and even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them? and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." Now you see the distinction the Bible draws between God's people and children of Satan. Now you understand why he calls them the church. They are people who have been called out of Satan's service into the service of God; called out of Satan's kingdom, into the kingdom of God. That is why the Lord wants us to live clean, righteous, upright lives and keep ourselves "unspotted from the world".

Now the Bible also teaches that we are called by the gospel, to come out of the world into the kingdom of Christ. You know the Lord Jesus gave the charge to his disciples to go preach the gospel to all the world, to every creature; and as they went forth preaching the gospel to people who were in bondage to Satan and sin, and as they told the people about Almighty God and his wonderful love for them; told

the people about the Lord Jesus Christ who died that they might live; told the people about salvation that God's grace had provided; told them about heaven and warned them about hell, they came to understand that it is better to serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ than to serve the devil. "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". (Rom. 6: 23.) Those who were thus convicted, resolved in their minds to turn away from Satan and to come out of the world and enter into the service of God. Therefore, they repented of their sins and acknowledged their new Lord and master. They are not ashamed to confess the name of Jesus and thereby, take their oath of allegiance to their new Lord and master. And then the Bible says that they were baptized into Christ. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Paul tells us in Gal. 3: 26-27, "ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." In that way a man is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love. "Col. 1: 12.) When the apostles talked about the church of the Lord Jesus as the kingdom of God, as the body of Christ, as the temple of God, the house of God and so on, they are talking about a divine institution. They are not talking about religious organizations that men might call churches, that men have founded and that are ruled and controlled by men. But they are talking about God's kingdom, God's family, a divine institution, heaven-born and blood-bought. These are God's people. Now this is what we mean when we speak of the church.

Sometimes people misunderstand my brethren when we say that you must be a member of the church of the Lord Jesus to be saved. Sometimes they say "You are narrowminded and you are selfish, and you think no one is going to heaven except those who are members of the church of Christ." Well, of course, that is true, but we do not mean what they think we mean ordinarily. We do not have in mind a denomination but the Kingdom of God, the family of God, the body of Christ. Men do not have to be members of a denomination to go to heaven. In the early days Paul and Peter, John and James, and all the apostles and the early Christians, did not join denominations. But they were children of God, they were members of God's church and they were citizens of the kingdom of heaven. A man today can be a member of the church of the Lord Jesus, the kingdom of heaven; be a child of God, do all that God wants him to do and go to heaven when he dies, and never join a denomination. He simply renders obedience to the gospel of Christ and becomes a Christian, a child of God, a citizen of his kingdom, and a member of the body of Christ. If people in New Testament days could do that, why cannot they do the same today? So, when we talk about the church and say you must be a member of the church of the Lord to be saved, we mean that you must hear the gospel and come out of the world and separate yourself from sin and Satan and enter into the kingdom of God or else you cannot be saved. Now that is what we are talking about. When we say that you must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved, we simply mean that you must be a child of God, a member of God's family, which Paul says is the church. You cannot remain all of your life a child of Satan and go to heaven when you die. But you must come out of the world and become a citizen of God's kingdom, which is his church, if you would be saved. But this is not a denomination.

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 26, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

My subject today is "The Church that Jesus Built." In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." In Acts 20:28 the apostle Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." We are not talking about a denomination that Jesus built, because Jesus did not build a denomination or denominations. The church that Jesus built is revealed in the New Testament. Sometimes people will ask, "But how may I know that I am a member of the church that Jesus built?" Well, the Lord gave us a pattern of his church in the New Testament. As he gave Noah instructions in building the ark, and as he gave Moses instruction in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, and warned him to build the tabernacle according to the pattern, so he has given us a pattern of the church in the New Testament. And the Lord wants us to follow that pattern as he wanted Noah to follow the instruction in building the ark and as he warned Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness. We are not interested in just any kind of religious organization; we are not even interested in religious organizations that might be similar to the church that Jesus built. But we are interested in his church only. A horse and a cow are similar in many respects, but they are far from being identical. There are many religious organizations in the world that might be in many respects similar to the church that Jesus built, but we are interested only in the church that Jesus built.

The Lord's church is spoken of in two senses in the New Testament: (1) In the general, or universal sense, and (2) in the local sense. When Jesus said in Matt. 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church," he included all of God's people in all of the world, and here the church is spoken of in the universal or general sense. When Paul addressed the church in Corinth and spoke of it as "the church of God in Corinth," he included all, but only God's people in that locality, in the city of Corinth. And so the church in the New Testament in the general sense, included all of God's people all over the world, and the church in a local sense included all of God's people in a given locality. We do not read of a universal, national, or international organization of the church. The only organization of the church revealed in the New Testament is the local congregation. Of this we shall speak a little later.

The creed of the church that Jesus built is God's word only. Paul said in II Timothy 3:16-17, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." In I Peter 4:11, Peter said, "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God." That is, if any man would teach or preach God's word, let him speak as God's word speaks. The creeds of men are but their opinions about the Bible. No man will be judged by human creeds on the judgment day. Why should any man want to serve God by human creeds today when he knows that he is not going to be judged by those creeds in the judgement day? God's word alone was sufficient in the first century and it is all-sufficient today.

The church that Jesus built is called sometimes, in the New Testament, the church of God, churches of Christ, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the house of God, the temple of God, and so on. But these are not proper names of the church; they are but descriptive terms suggesting ownership or some feature of the kingdom of God. Strictly speaking, God did not give a name to his church. But we speak of it today as the church of the Lord, the church of God, the church of Christ, as does the New Testament. Sometimes people refer to the church as the Christian Church. But this is not a proper name found in the New Testament. The term means that it is not a pagan church; it is not a Jewish church; but that it is Christian. Let us therefore speak of the church as the church of God, the church of Christ, kingdom of heaven, house of God, and so on.

The members of the church that Jesus built were sometimes called disciples, sometimes called saints, sometimes brethren, sometimes Christians. They were called disciples because they were students of God's word; they were called brethren because they were members of the family of God, which is the church of God. They were called saints with reference to their godly, devout character; they were called Christians as followers and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or a meddling in other men's matters: but if any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (I Peter 4:15.)

As to the organization of the church that Jesus built, there is no national or international organization revealed in the New Testament. The only organization revealed in the New Testament is of the local church. Jesus is the head of the church. In Colossians 1:18, Paul said, "And he is the head of the body, the church." In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul said, "And he put all things in subjection unto his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Jesus, therefore, is the head of the church. He is the only head of the church, in heaven and on earth. In Colossians 3:17, we read, "Whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Whatever we do in worship and service to God, let it be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus is the head; the only head, in heaven and on earth, of the church. Sometimes people ask, "Where is the headquarters of the church of the Lord Jesus? Is it in Nashville? Is it in Dallas, Texas? Is it in St. Louis? New York? or just where is the headquarters of the church of the Lord Jesus?" There is a statement found in Philippians 3:20, that I think will throw a great deal of light on this question. Here Paul said, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." The Philippians could understand this statement; they could appreciate it, whereas perhaps others would not have. Luke tells us, when he related the story of the beginning of the church in Philippi, that Philippi was a Roman colony. (Acts 16:12.) That meant that every citizen of the city of Philippi was a free Roman citizen and that he had his name enrolled in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. Now Paul is saying here that our citizenship, as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, is not in Jerusalem, in Ephesus, Alexandria of Egypt, or even in Rome, but our citizenship is in heaven, where our King now reigns at God's right hand. So the headquarters of the church of the Lord Jesus is in heaven.

In the local congregation there are elders in the church. Peter said, "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of restraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." (I Peter 5:2-4.) Now that was Peter's instruction to the elders of the church. They are sometimes called shepherds; they are sometimes called bishops; sometimes called overseers; sometimes called elders. They were called elders because they were men of age sufficient to have wisdom and pru-

force in guiding God's people. They were called shepherds because they were to lead and to feed, and to protect the church from false teachers, even as the shepherd would feed and protect his flock from wild animals. They were called bishops or overseers because they were to exercise the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly according to the will of God. The word bishop means overseer. In the American Standard Version in Acts 20:28, Paul called the elders at Ephesus bishops. The authorized version calls them overseers. The word bishop simply means overseer. The bishop of the New Testament church was not a man who was placed upon a pedestal, exercising authority over a large area and a large number of congregations. He was simply an elder, a bishop; he was an overseer, a shepherd of a congregation.

There were also deacons in the church that Jesus built. Paul addressed the bishops and deacons in the church at Philippi and he named the qualifications for deacons in his first letter to Timothy. Now the deacons are the servants of the church. They serve the Lord under the leadership of the elders, even as do the evangelist and the teachers of the church. Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus has taught us that he who serves best is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, then he who serves well as a deacon, as a servant of God's people, certainly is respected and loved by God's people and is honored by the Lord.

There were also teachers in the church. In Acts 13:1 we read there were teachers and prophets in the church at Antioch. Paul instructed the aged women to be "teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Titus 2:3-5.) And then again in I Timothy 2:12, Paul said, "I permit not a woman to teach, not to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." The apostle has not contradicted himself in these two statements. In one statement he instructs the aged women to be teachers; in the next statement he said, "I permit not a woman to teach, not to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." He does not forbid a woman to teach under proper circumstances, but he does forbid that she be a public proclaimer of the gospel and in any degree wherein she exercises dominion over a man. Christianity is a taught religion, and God's kingdom will spread throughout the world today only in proportion that God's word is efficiently taught by men and women.

Now as to the doctrine of the church, strictly speaking, the church has no doctrine. The church has no authority to originate a doctrine. It is rather, the doctrine of the Lord. I know sometimes people speak of the doctrine of this church and the doctrine of that church, and that may be true with respect to these churches. But we are talking about the church that Jesus built. In II John 9, John said, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." So I want to emphasize that it is not the doctrine of the church; it is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus has taught all of us the same thing. In the New Testament we find that the Lord, through his apostles, taught men to believe. "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God." (Heb. 11:6.) The Lord said, "Repent or perish." And in Matthew 10:32, he said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." In Romans 10:10, the apostle said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And then in Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Then in Revelation 2:10, the Lord said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Now this is the doctrine of the Lord. And this is

The Church that Jesus Built

what the early church taught to all the world. Paul speaks of the church as the "pillar and ground of the truth." It is the responsibility of the church to preach the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if all men everywhere would be satisfied with the word of the Lord, the doctrine of the Lord, and his doctrine only, then all men would teach the same thing, believe the same thing, and practice the same thing, even as did the church that Jesus built.

God has also taught his people how to worship. In John 4:24, when Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman, he said, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." To worship God in spirit is to worship him sincerely, earnestly from the heart. We are not to go through some formal acts when our heart is not in them, no more than a man would pray when his heart is not in his prayer. But what we do must be done from the heart.

We are to worship also in truth, that is, as God's truth authorizes us. We find that the apostles taught the early Christians to sing and to pray, to lay by in store on the first day of the week, to remember the Lord in eating the Lord's supper and to teach God's word. No man living today knows that more or less than what the apostles taught people to do in worship to God is acceptable unto the Lord. This is how the church that Jesus built worshipped God, and this is how we want to worship God today.

As the work of the church, it is the responsibility of the church to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Paul spoke of the church as the "pillar and ground of the truth." It does not belong to the government to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus; it is not primarily the responsibility of the educational systems to preach the gospel; nor does it belong to organizations and lodges that men have established. But it is the mission of the church to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Not only that, the church should edify itself in teaching God's word and building up the saints in the most holy faith. And the church should remember the poor. When Jesus was upon the earth he went about doing good, but he is not in the flesh any longer. But we, as his servants, go about doing good in Jesus' name. That is, in his stead, as his servants, we serve those who stand in need. Then, of course, it is the mission of the church to glorify God.

Now this is the church you read about in the New Testament. It is the church that Jesus built; it is the church that he purchased with his blood; it is the church of which he is the Savior. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23.) Now we can be members of the church that Jesus built if we will do what people did in New Testament days as they followed the teaching of the apostles. In Acts 2:47 we read that the Lord added the saved to the church. That is why we know that all the saved are in the church. He has added all the saved to the church. Those that he counted saved were those who believed on the Lord, confessed him as Lord, repented of their sins, and were baptized into Christ. (Acts 2:37-38.)

THE GREAT COMMISSION

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 31, 1960 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

After the Lord had lived on the earth thirty years or longer, they crucified him, buried his body, and on the third day he arose from the grave. During the space of forty days between his resurrection and his ascension, he appeared to his disciples at various intervals and talked to them about his kingdom. It was also during that period when he gave to them the great commission. According to Matthew 28:19 Jesus said to his apostles on a mountain in Galilee, "All authority hath been given unto me, in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Mark's record, found in Mark 16:16 says, "Go...preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." And in Luke 24:46 Jesus said, "Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead, the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

It is important that we notice the time when this commission was given. It was not given during his personal ministry on the earth, but after he had completed his life's work, had been crucified, buried and resurrected. He is about to go back to heaven when he gives the great commission unto his apostles whom he had trained for three years or longer.

Now there are other great commissions that we read about, both in the Bible and out of the Bible. In the history of England there is the Magna Charta, and in our own country we think of the Declaration of Independence as being a great document. In the Bible we read about God's charge to Moses to lead Israel, a great host of people, out of Egyptian bondage, to the promised land. We also read of God's charge to Noah to build an ark through which he and his family were saved from the flood. But the commission Jesus gave to his apostles is the greatest commission ever given to mortal man. It is great because it was given by the Lord Jesus. Any document sent out by men in high office who exercise great authority, like the governor of our state or the president of the United States, is considered an important document. But the great commission did not come from any human authority; it came from heaven. It is great because it was given by all authority in heaven and on earth. It is great because it was universal. It did not have to do with the people of one nation or one country; but it included all the people of all the nations, of all the ages—"Go preach the gospel to every nation." And finally, it is the great commission because it announces the terms of salvation to lost man. When Noah carried out his commission he saved himself and his family. Moses delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage; Gideon delivered Israel from the Midianites, but these do not compare with the great commission in importance. It has not only to do with our temporal blessings, but it has to do with our soul's salvation. And for these reasons and others we like to call it the great commission.

I want us to note a few things about this commission. Jesus said, "Go preach the gospel." Why did the Lord Jesus want his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature? Paul gave the answer when he said, in I Cor. 1:21, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Not only what they preached was foolishness to some people, but the very plan of saving man by the preaching of the gospel was foolishness to some people, and to some people today. Nevertheless, it is God's plan to save man by the preaching of the gospel.

In John 6:44 Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God, and everyone that hath heard from the Father, and learned, cometh unto me." God draws man, through the preaching of the gospel. "No man," Jesus said, "can come unto the Father, except he draw him." But he is drawn when he hears the word, believes it and obeys it. And this is why, no doubt, Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The gospel is God's drawing power. It is God's power to save man, to convert and to convict him of his sins. It was so in the days of the apostles and it is still God's power to save man. The gospel has lost none of its power to save men. James tells us in James 1:21, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." The Lord Jesus sent the apostle Paul throughout the Gentile world and Paul turned thousands of people from serving idols to serving the true and living God. What power did he use? How was it that he was so successful in turning so many people from idols to serve God?

In Acts 26:16 we read about Jesus appearing to Paul on Damascus road and he said to Paul, "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both to the things wherein thou hast seen me, and to the things wherein I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance unto them that are sanctified by faith in me." Now our question is, What power did Paul use as he went throughout the Gentile world and turned thousands upon thousands from darkness to light, to open their eyes and turn them from the power of Satan unto God? And the answer is, The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When writing to the Corinthians in his first epistle (I Cor. 15:1-2) Paul said, "I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except you believed in vain." The gospel is the seed of the kingdom. The Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower said, "The word (the word of God) is the seed of the kingdom." And as the apostles went forth and preached the gospel they were sowing the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of men on the earth. And in that way God's kingdom spread throughout all the world. And that is how God's kingdom is spread throughout the world today. And that is why God charged his apostles, "Go preach the gospel." It was God's pleasure to save man by the preaching of the gospel.

It has never been God's plan to save man by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, as some people would have us believe. Of course, a man is converted and convicted by the Spirit as he is converted and convicted by the gospel; for the Holy Spirit is the author of the gospel.

The great commission, also, as we said a moment ago, announces the terms of salvation to lost man. Let us read again Romans 1:16-17, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein (in the gospel) is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith." Paul was not talking about the attributes of God's character when he spoke about "a righteousness of God", but he was talking about God's standard of righteousness for man, or that which constitutes righteousness in God's sight. Not a righteousness of the law of Moses, not a

not a righteousness according to man's standard, but a righteousness according to God's standard. So God's way, or plan, of saving man is revealed in the gospel. That is why Jesus commanded his apostles to go preach the gospel to every creature, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned." And Jesus said repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The Lord intended that the apostles go out and tell the world about the Lord Jesus, that he is the Son of God and to call upon the people to turn away from their sins and to be baptized unto the remission of their sins. All of this is included in the great commission.

As the apostles went forth and preached under the great commission we find the people did these very things. On Pentecost, at the conclusion of Peter's sermon, the people cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In Acts 18:8 we read when Paul went down to Corinth and preached the gospel, that the Corinthians "hearing believed and were baptized." In Acts 8 we read that Philip, the evangelist, entered the chariot with the Ethiopian eunuch and preached Christ as they rode along the road, and when they came to water, the eunuch said, "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?...And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch and he baptized him." In Acts 16 we read about the conversions of Lydia and the jailor, and it is the same story. They heard the gospel, believed and were baptized. In Acts 10 we read that the first Gentiles became Christians according to the terms laid down in the great commission. Peter went to Caesarea, preached the gospel to them; they heard and believed and Peter commanded them to be baptized. Now this is in harmony with so many other scriptures, such as Paul's statement in Galatians 3:26-27, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

It is interesting to note that infants were not included in the great commission. Infants cannot believe, they cannot repent of their sins, they cannot be baptized of their own free will. In Acts 2:41 we read that after Peter told the people to repent and be baptized, "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." Infants are not subjects of the gospel. The gospel is to be preached to people who are lost in sin. The little infant is not lost; he is safe. A man is not condemned before God until he commits sin. The Bible does not teach that we inherit the sins of Adam and Eve or our forefathers. We do at times suffer the consequences of the sins of those who lived before us, but we are not guilty of their sins. The Lord Jesus said, "Ye shall die in your sins, and where I am ye cannot come." He did not say that you will die in Adam's sin. So until one reaches the age of responsibility and violates God's laws, he is safe, without sin in God's sight, and the gospel is not addressed unto such. But the gospel is addressed to all men everywhere who have been separated from God because of their sins. (Isa. 59:1,2.)

Jesus also said in the great commission, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." After one has believed in the Lord, repented of his sins and been baptized into Christ, he is still to be taught how to serve God faithfully. So in Act 2 we read at the conclusion of the first sermon under the great commission that they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. In II John 9 Jesus said, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." John is talking to people who are Christians, people who have obeyed the gospel. In Rev. 2:10 Jesus said to his servants, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Again he said in John 15:10, "If ye keep my command-

ments, ye shall abide in my love." "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me."

Now during the first century the apostles and early evangelists went forth and faithfully carried out the great commission. Thousands of people believed, repented of their sins and were baptized into Christ and were added to the church by the Lord. Now if you are a believer today, and are willing to repent of your sins; if you are willing to accept the terms laid down in the gospel and be baptized unto the remission of your sins, the Lord will add you to the same church to which he added the people on the day of Pentecost. Here is the last will and testament of the Lord, sealed by his blood, approved in heaven, preached by the apostles. I would be untrue to God; I would be untrue to his Book; I would be untrue to you, as a gospel preacher if I did not tell you exactly the terms of salvation as laid down in God's book. This is the way the Lord will accept you; this is the way a man can become a Christian; this is the only way that a man can become a Christian. This is the Lord's way. "Go...preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

IS BIBLE STUDY IMPORTANT?

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on October 5, 1958 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, and heard over radio station W L A C.

The apostle Paul said to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15). And in Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, as recorded in the twentieth chapter of Acts and the thirty-second verse, he said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified." We have heard it said, there is power in knowledge. To be well informed on any subject gives one an advantage. But diligent study of a subject is necessary to obtain the knowledge one desires on that subject. Astronomers, civil engineers, doctors, lawyers, bankers, and so on, did not obtain their positions by a single bound, but by hard work and diligent study. Not many men can master all the subjects they might be interested in in this life, but every man should certainly take time to be familiar with the one book on earth that tells him of his origin and his destiny.

Man is both spiritual and physical. Paul said in II Corinthians 4:16, "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." And Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." And again he said, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" From these scriptures it is apparent that the care of the soul is more important than the care of the body. Now the Bible is the one book in the world that teaches us concerning our soul's welfare. How important it is, then, that every man be a diligent student of God's word. God commands us to study his word. Through his prophet, Isaiah, a long time ago he said, "Seek ye out the book of Jehovah and read." Paul said to Timothy in I Timothy 4:13, "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching." And again in Ephesians 5:17, "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the wisdom of the Lord is." Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." You remember the psalmist said in Psalms 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and on his law doth he meditate day and night." Now do these scriptures mean anything to us? Are they addressed only to the preacher, to the Bible teacher, to the elders? No. They are directed to every man and woman and to every child who is old enough to understand God's word. And when we neglect to study God's word we disobey God. There are not many of us who would deliberately place our souls in the hands of a man, pay him so much money and say, "Now you get my soul to heaven the best way you can, just be sure to get it there." And nevertheless, that is what one does when he does not study God's word, but allows someone else to do his reading and his study for him and tells him what to do.

The Bible teaches that when we neglect to study God's word we will suffer certain evil consequences. Paul, talking about such people said in Ephesians 4:18, "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts; who being past feeling gave themselves to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness." Here the apostle is simply saying that their understanding was so darkened because of ignorance that they were not capable of distinguishing truth from error, and so without feeling of conscience, they gave themselves up to filthiness and wickedness. Sometimes you hear people say, "I don't see any harm in that, and I

don't see any harm in this," and in so saying, they tell the truth. But because they cannot see the harm does not mean that the harm is not there. It may mean that because of their ignorance of God's word that they are not able to discern good from evil or right from wrong.

The Bible also tells us that men are destroyed for lack of knowledge. God said through his prophet Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6). Those who rebel against the light can expect no more than to perish in the darkness, and those who refuse the knowledge of God in their hearts will perish in their ignorance. The apostle Paul describing such people said in Romans 1:28, "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting." For example, Sodom and Gomorrah perished when God could not find ten righteous souls therein. And Jerusalem, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, in due time were destroyed because they refused to have God in their knowledge. And because men became so wicked in the days of Noah and forfeited their right to live upon this earth, God sent a flood and destroyed them all. It was not because they did not have the light; it was because they hated it and rejected it. They neither desired to know God's will nor to do it. They did not teach their children to serve the Lord and God forgot both them and their children.

The Bible also teaches that because of our ignorance we will sometimes do the very thing that God does not want us to do, and all the time we may be thinking that we are doing the will of God. You remember Jesus preparing his disciples for what was to come in later days, said to them, "They shall put you out of the synagogue: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offers service unto God." (John 16:2). And they did that very thing. They persecuted the apostles from city to city, from province to province, from country to country, and finally most of them laid down their lives for preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And all the time the people who were persecuting the apostles thought they were doing the very thing that God wanted them to do. In Acts 3:17 Peter said, "And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." He was talking about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus and he said, "I know that in your ignorance you crucified the Lord of glory." Nevertheless, the Lord called upon them to repent. Paul said concerning himself in Acts 26:9, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Now these scriptures teach us that it is possible for a man in his ignorance of God's word, to do the very thing that God does not want him to do. And we find that quite often among people today. Many today will worship God by the precepts of men and not by the word of God. Many today will become members of human organizations believing that they are members of the body of Christ. Some men will tell us that you do not have to be baptized to be saved, Men today will go fishing on Lord's day and neglect the worship. And they will do many other such like things in their ignorance and all the time think that they are doing the will of God. They are often as honest and sincere in what they are doing as we are in what we are doing this morning. But why do they do it? The answer is, because of their ignorance of the truth. They think they are serving God; they believe that they are doing the very thing that God wants them to do, but in their ignorance they are doing the very thing that God does not want them to do.

There is no excuse for a man's ignorance of God's word today. Everyone has access to the Bible. A copy of the Bible can be bought at a very reasonable sum, and if a man is not able to pay that, somebody will be glad to give him one. Every member of the family should have his own copy of the Bible and he should have some good time every day to read God's word. There is no excuse for being ignorant of God's word today.

On the other hand, let me call your attention to some things that God's word will do for us, some of the blessings that we will enjoy when we study God's word. In Psalm 19:7 the psalmist said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." And we know that was true on the day of Pentecost when Peter stood up with the eleven and preached the gospel of Christ for the first time after the ascension of the Lord Jesus. When he convinced those people that day that they had crucified the Lord of glory, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" The people were convicted of their sins; they were convinced of their sins; they were converted, and now they were believers in the Lord, whereas before they were not believers in him. And how did it come about? By the preaching of the Lord Jesus that day, by the apostles. So, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." No wonder the apostle said in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth." Again, in I Peter 1:22, we read, "Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently." So God's word, planted in our hearts will purify our hearts. It will plant noble ideals in our hearts and cast out that which is evil. In John 17:17, Jesus said, "Sanctify them in the truth, for thy word is truth." So by following God's word we are set apart for the service of God; we are made meet for the Master's use; we are sanctified. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Peter said in I Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." We are very fond of feeding the physical man, but how often do we feed the spiritual man? We know very well that we cannot feed the spiritual man upon food we use to feed the physical man. How important it is, then, if we would be strong and grow up as the Lord wants us to grow that we feast upon God's word. The psalmist also tells us that it will be a light unto our path. In Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Again, in II Timothy 3:15 Paul said to Timothy, "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hath been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and from a babe thou hast known the secret writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." So, if you would be wise unto salvation you do not have to read all the books that men have written about the Bible; read the Bible. Study the Bible, and when you learn what the Bible teaches concerning man's salvation you will know as much as anybody else in all the world and you will be wise unto salvation. James tells us in James 1:21, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls." God's word reveals to us God's will. It instructs us in the way of righteousness; it tells us what God wants us to do to become Christians and it tells us how to serve the Lord faithfully as Christians. It will save our souls.

Furthermore, in Romans 15:4, Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." So there is comfort in the scriptures. There is no comfort compared to the comfort that the scriptures give us. And this is particularly true when the trials of life lie heavily upon us, or when we come to bury our dead and say good-bye to our loved ones. God's word will give us comfort. But that is not all. In John 12:48, Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." You may neglect to study God's word now; you may think it unimportant; you may count other things of more importance than studying God's word, and you may forget it and push it aside, but it will meet you in the judgment day. The Bible tells us that we will be judged by the word of God. Now in view of these statements from God's word; in view of the power of his word, its influence in our lives and in the interest of our souls, we should be diligent in the study of God's word. How can any man go along through life and think himself

to be a faithful servant of God when he neglects to study God's word even one day in his life? No wonder the apostle said to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." No wonder he said in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, "And now, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified." May the good Lord help us that we may love his word and read his word and diligently study his word and nurture it in our hearts and live by it every day.

If you are not a Christian and you want to know what God wants you to do to become a Christian, you should go to the Bible and let the Bible tell you. It is not what you think you ought to do; it is not what I think you ought to do; it is not what other people have done; it is what does God's word tell you. You remember in the great commission as Jesus charged his apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned." According to Matthew he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." On the day of Pentecost, when the apostle Peter preached the first sermon under the great commission, and the people were convicted of the sin of crucifying their Lord, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Peter said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts

2:38). And as we go along through the book of Acts and read the story of how the apostles went out preaching the gospel under the great commission, guided by the Holy Spirit, we find this was the answer that they gave to the people who wanted to become Christians, children of God. They were taught to believe in their hearts; they were taught to sincerely repent of their sins; they were taught to confess the faith that was in their hearts concerning the Lord Jesus; and they were taught to be baptized into Christ unto the remission of their sins. And then, becoming Christians, they were taught to serve the Lord according to his word, to be faithful unto the end. Paul said that when the Lord Jesus comes with his angels "in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." And so this morning, if you are not a Christian, why not become a Christian? Why not take God's word and obey God's word. Let it be indeed a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. May the good Lord bless you to accept his invitation now.

DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on November 1, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee..

I am reading from the fifth chapter of the Hebrew letter, "For when by reason of time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that someone teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not solid food. For everyone that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." In this statement from the apostle we learn that many Christians in his day did not make the progress in the study of God's word as was expected of them. This is also true today, and for this reason this is always a timely lesson. I want particularly to talk to you about the thought suggested in the fourteenth verse. "But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil."

When one reaches manhood he is not expected to eat food prepared for babes. As time goes on he should be able to eat strong meat. And so the apostle Paul is saying here that some Christians have not made the progress in the study of God's word and in living the Christian life and they are still babes spiritually. And for this reason they are not able to discern good and evil. It is not a rare thing to hear people say concerning such things, "I don't see any harm in that." And perhaps they are telling the truth. They do not see the harm simply because they are not able to discern what is right and what is wrong. But we should always remember that because a man cannot see the harm does not mean that the harm is not there. While some people find difficulty in knowing what is right and what is wrong, a great many people make this statement simply to justify themselves in what they are doing. And there are some who want specific statements from the Bible naming every sin. There are some sins specifically named in the Bible. In Gal. 5, Paul named a number of the works of the flesh of which he said, "They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In the thirteenth chapter of the Roman letter Christians are instructed to be obedient to the laws of the land, and then that there are things dishonest, deceitful, lying, covetousness, hypocrisy, stealing, things indecent and things immodest, mentioned in the Bible. We know that these things are wrong. But the Bible does not name every sin in the catalog of sin. Customs and practices change through the ages. For example, the old hoop skirt would be entirely out of style today, and some of the clothes that women wear today would have been considered indecent and immodest in the day of the hoop skirt. Our great-grandfathers did not have to worry about questionable picture shows their children might see, because there were none. Neither did they have to worry about the modern waltz. But they had problems that we are not troubled with. All of which make us realize that it would be impossible for us to name every sin in the catalog of sin. I am not saying that certain things are sinful now that were not sinful then. But I am saying that circumstances and customs and styles and such like do change our attitude toward certain practices.

Now the question that is before us this morning is, How may a Christian discern what is right and what is wrong? I think that all of us should find this a profitable study, and particularly Christian young people. They have not learned so much as might be expected of older people, and sometimes they find it quite difficult to know just what to do under certain circumstances. I want to suggest a number of rules which may be used in judging what is right and what it wrong, wherein certain principles are laid down. These will pretty well tell us what is right and what is wrong.

In the first place we could say, "Whatever weakens my influence for good as a Christian is wrong." Christians are called by the Lord the "light of the world and the salt of the earth." They, as light, should show the way. As salt, they should provide a seasoning and a saving influence. Every man wields an influence for good or for bad. Paul says, "No man lives unto himself." That being true, we know that God will hold us responsible for the influence that we wield in this world, whether it is good or bad. Therefore, any practice that destroys my influence for good as a Christian is wrong. When a little girl died, her playmate wanted inscribed upon her tomb, "It was easy to be good when she played with us." And you remember the apostle Peter said, in his first epistle, the third chapter and the first verse, "In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear. On one occasion a good Christian woman was asked, "How do you ever expect to convert your husband? You cannot get him to hear the gospel preached; he won't read the Bible, and he won't let anyone talk to him and you cannot talk to him." Her answer was, "I mean to show him." - She simply meant, I am going to live the Christian life so well that he will want to be a Christian. And that is exactly what the apostle Peter is saying here. God will hold us responsible for our influence and we can influence people to become Christians. Sometimes people might say, "It is none of your business how I live or what I do. If I want to serve the devil and go to hell when I die, that is my business." And someone has answered him, "You may, and it is your privilege to do wrong, to live a wicked life, to serve the devil and go to hell when you die, if you want to; but you do not have any right to carry someone with you." And that is exactly what one will do when he influences others to sin.

In the second place, "Anything that hinders me in performing my Christian duty is wrong." You remember Jesus said in Matt. 6:33. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Now our first concern should always be to serve God. I heard a good man say a few days ago while visiting him in the hospital, "My wife's first interest is the church; her second interest is her duties as a mother; her third interest is as a wife; her fourth interest is the house." And I thought he put it just about right. That is the way God wants all of us to think about this matter of serving him. We should seek first God's kingdom. We should not let any duty or anything in this life hinder us in performing our Christian duties. You remember the apostle Paul said in II Tim. 2:4, "No soldier on duty entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier." Many of you perhaps served in the armed services of the country and you can remember that when you became a soldier you had to give up your interest in many things. Many sold out businesses and forgot all about them as they went into the armed services. Why? Because when a man becomes a soldier he has to give his first interest to that. He cannot very well run his business back home and serve as a soldier on the battlefield at the same time. And that is exactly what the apostle is saying here--that a good soldier of the cross will not entangle himself in the affairs of this life to the degree that it will hinder him in his duty as a Christian. You remember the Lord Jesus in Luke 14 tells us about a certain man who had a great supper. And he sent out the invitations to his friends and one of them said, "I have bought a field, and I must needs to out and see it." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to prove them." And the third said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." You remember how the Lord said these people would not have any part in his great feast. And he is warning people who make excuses for not serving the Lord and for not becoming Christians. Today sometimes people allow Sunday jobs, business interests, worldliness generally, even recreation, social obligations and such like, to prove a stumbling block and hinder them in their Christian duties. Hardly before they realize it they have left their first love and drifted away from the Lord. So, anything that hinders me in performing my Christian duty is wrong.

In the next place, "Whatever places upon me an unequal yoke as a Christian is wrong." In II Cor. 6:14, Paul said, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." In this statement he was talking about Christians participating in the affairs of the heathen, such as in their temple services, and things of that sort, and he is drawing a lesson here from a law in the Old Testament where God would not allow Israel to yoke the ox and the ass together. He said, "This is an unequal yoke." And now the apostle is saying that when a Christian allows himself to be yoked up with unbelievers to the degree that it hinders him in his Christian work it is an unequal yoke. In the Ephesian letter 5:11, "Have no fellowship with unequal works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." Paul also said, "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." As light and darkness have nothing in common; as righteousness and unrighteousness have nothing in common; as Christ and Satan have nothing in common, so Christians have nothing in common with the ways of the world and those who serve Satan. He should not allow himself to become so involved in anything wherein he will find himself unequally yoked and therefore find it difficult to serve the Lord.

In the next place, "Whatever is harmful to my body is wrong in God's sight." In I cor. 6:19, Paul said, "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for you were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." In I Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." In 1 Cor. 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, for the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to the world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Our bodies are the houses in which our spirits live while we live on the earth. When the spirit departs from the body, the body dies. James tells us in James 2:26, "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." A man enjoys good health, if the body is sound. And so much of our happiness depends upon how we take care of our bodies. Anything that we do that has a tendency to destroy our bodies is wrong in the sight of God. Now I do not have to enumerate all the bad habits that men form in a lifetime and say, "Now these are the things that are harmful." God has blessed us with the good sense to know when a thing is harmful to our bodies. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties." And every Christian today should purpose in his heart to refrain from every habit that is harmful to his body.

In the next place, "Whatever corrupts my mind, my thought, my heart, is sinful in the sight of God." Solomon said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." You can read a man's heart by listening to him talk for a little while, because as a man thinks, he talks; and as he talks, he thinks, he acts. The Lord Jesus said, "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man." (Matt. 15:19.) Now this is why some people cannot carry on a clean conversation without punctuating almost every sentence with some kind of vile language, or find delight in talking about the filthy things of life. Why is it? It is because their heart is corrupt. Therefore, whatever tends to corrupt my heart is sinful. This is why Christians, (and listen young people) should be very careful in their choice of the books and the magazines they read, and pictures, whether moving or still, or the companions they keep. You know, some men would not dare take poison into their stomachs, and yet they will allow their hearts to be filled with the vilest and deadliest kind of poison. Paul said in Phil. 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are

lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." So the Lord wants Christians to think on things that are good, things that are pure and noble, because anything that corrupts my heart is sinful.

Finally, we might say, "Whatsoever is doubtful in my mind is sinful if I do that thing." In Rom. 14:23, Paul in talking about Christians eating meat that is sacrificed to idols said, "He that doubteth is condemned if he eat." Paul was saying that it made no difference so far as he was concerned whether the meat had been sacrificed to an idol or not, but some Christians did not have that knowledge and they were afraid to eat it. So long as you have doubt about any matter, you had better let it alone. So if there is anything that we have not covered in these rules that we have laid down this morning, we can conclude by saying, if it is doubtful in your mind whether it is right or wrong, you had better let it alone. Paul said we should hold faith in a good conscience.

Now think about these things. I think Christians want to know what is right and what is wrong. First, whatever weakens my influence as a Christian is wrong. Whatever places upon me an unequal yoke is wrong. Whatever is harmful to my body is wrong. Whatever corrupts my heart is wrong. Whatever is doubtful in my mind is wrong. A Christian who really loves the Lord and earnestly serves the Lord and strives to walk in the footsteps of the Master does not find it so difficult to know what is right and what is wrong. He will not find it so difficult if he studies God's word. He will be able to discern good and evil. I heard Brother E. A. Elam tell this little story years ago. A young lady asked him if it was wrong for her to do certain things. He quoted the passage that I read this morning where the apostle said that some had not grown sufficiently as to be able to discern good and evil. Later, she asked her mother, "What did Brother Elam mean by that scripture?" And her mother abruptly said, "He just simply meant that you did not know how to judge good and evil." She had not grown in a knowledge of God's word sufficiently to discern right and wrong. The Christian should delight in doing the things that are good. He should be the happiest man on the earth. A statement from Peter, I think, is so fitting just here. "He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 13, 1958 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station W L A C.

In the sixth chapter of Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia, and the second verse, we read, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." In the fifth verse of the same chapter he said, "For every man shall bear his own burden." The apostle is simply saying that in this life we can, and we should, help one another bear the burdens of life. But there will come a time when we stand before the judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus and every man must bear his own burden.

I suppose there is no experience in life that has a more sobering effect upon a man than to be faced with responsibilities. ~~As we grow up in good homes,~~ we grow up rather careless or free of responsibility. We know that Father and Mother will give us food and shelter and the clothes that we need. When we get sick they will give us medical care. But as a young man enters into manhood, takes unto himself a wife, and begins to build his own home, he begins to realize, perhaps for the first time, what it means to face responsibility. As he goes out to secure a job he again is faced with responsibility to make good in that job, that he might be able to provide for his loved ones, and that he also might make good for the benefit of the firm for which he works. And all along through life men are faced with responsibilities. But regardless of what responsibilities one may be faced with in this life, they all fade into nothing compared with the responsibility of the soul. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:10, that we shall all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that we will have to answer to him for deeds done in the body.

It is a fearful thing when we think about our responsibilities to God. It is said that someone asked Daniel Webster, the great statesman, what was the greatest problem that ever challenged his attention. And perhaps to their surprise, he did not answer concerning any problem of this life, but he answered, "My personal responsibility to my Creator." And that is the responsibility that each of us must also face. It is a responsibility that no one else can assume for us. I remember some years ago hearing a man say that he could not understand why the God of the Bible made man so he could sin, placed him in the beautiful paradise of Eden and then placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before him and in so many words said, "Now I dare you to eat of it; if you do, I will kill you." Well, of course, he wanted to make it appear rather difficult. But it is not such a difficult problem, and the answer is not to difficult.

Almighty God knew that he had to make man as he did in order to receive glory from man. And it was God's purpose in making man to be glorified by man. God did not make us as machines to do what he would want us to do, as an automobile that runs when we make it run and stops when we make it stop; or else God would be responsible for every foul deed as well as every good deed that we commit. But God blessed us with an intellect; he gave us the power to reason, and therefore the power to choose; he gave us the privilege to make our own choice, but he will hold us responsible for the choice that we make. If we choose to serve God, God is honored and glorified. If we choose to serve the devil, then the devil is glorified and God is dishonored. God could have made us so we could not sin, if he had wanted to, then we would not be men; we would be something else. It was therefore necessary that God make us as he did, bless us with an intellect, and therefore give us the right to choose for ourselves.

Today, if you are a Christian, it is because you want to be a Christian. It is not because God made you be a Christian; it is not because someone else made you be a Christian; but it is because you, of your own choice, made that decision. If you are not a Christian, it is because you do not want to be one. It is not because God will not let you be a Christian; it is not because anyone else will not let you be a Christian; but it is because the desire in your heart is not strong enough to lead you to obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus and accept salvation upon his terms. In the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet said that Israel will no longer use the proverb, "The fathers had eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." He said, "All souls are mine....the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The father will not be held responsible for the sins of the son; neither will the son be responsible for the sins of the father. But every soul must answer before God for his own sins.

In the second chapter of the Ephesian letter, the first verse, Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that before they became Christians they were dead in their trespasses and sins. He said, "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." They were not dead in the sin of Adam or their forefathers, but they were dead in their own trespasses and sins. On one occasion, Jesus rebuked the Jews who refused to believe in him, saying, "Ye shall die in your sins, and where I am there ye cannot come." And so it is today. If we are lost, we will be lost because of our sins, not because of the sins of our fathers; not because of the sin of Adam; but we are guilty before God for our sins and our sins only. Of course, it is true that we suffer consequences of the sins of others sometime. We understand that death came upon the entire human race as a consequence of the sin of Adam and that we are all going to die whether we want to or not, and that the resurrection will come upon the entire human race as a consequence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and we will all be raised from the grave whether we want to be or not. But we are not guilty of the sins of Adam. A drunken driver may have on the seat next to him a little innocent child, and he may cause his automobile to run into a telephone pole or crash into a stone wall and the little child is killed. The child suffers as a consequence of the sin of the drunken driver, but the little child is not guilty of the sin of the drunken driver.

You remember, also, Paul tells us in the Roman letter that "God will render to every man according to his works." That means that each individual must stand before God and answer for himself. I cannot believe for you and you cannot believe for me; I cannot repent of sins for you, you cannot repent of sins for me; I cannot confess the Lord for you, you cannot do that for me; I cannot be baptized for you, you cannot be baptized for me; I cannot live a Christian life for you, you cannot live a Christian life for me; I cannot remember the widows and the orphans for you; I cannot go out and help the needy for you; I cannot visit for you; and neither can you do these things for me. If it were possible for us to meet the responsibilities of others in this respect, no doubt many times a good father and mother would obey the gospel for a son or daughter, but they cannot do that. A mother, no doubt, would be baptized for her son or her daughter if she could, but she cannot do that. But God will render unto every man according to his works. Brother McGarvey said that the judgment is the heavy artillery of the gospel. And I would not be surprised but we have almost altogether used the light arms in our warfare against Satan and against sin. We do not talk about the judgment day as much as we ought to; we do not think about it as much as we ought to. It is a fearful thought and we would rather fill our minds with more pleasant thoughts in this life. But we need to think about the judgment day, because the judgment day is coming and there is no possible way for any of us to escape it.

We do not even like to be called into the courts of our land today. But we must meet God in the judgment. And when we come to the great judgment day, there will be no miscarriage in justice. I know in this life, and in the court of our

land, quite often people receive certain favors, perhaps through preference or prestige or something of the sort. But when we stand before the judge of all the world he will not ask us, "Were you rich, or were you poor? Who was your father and mother? How much prestige or influence did you wield upon the earth? Of what congregation were you a member?" He will ask us none of these questions; neither will he ask us what the church did of which we were a member. You know sometimes when we pool our efforts the record looks pretty good, but with God it is not so much what we do as a group, it is what we do as an individual. And in the judgment day the Lord will not say, "Who are you?" but "What did you do? How did you live? How did you serve me?" It is indeed a fearful thought as we think about our personal responsibility to our God.

There is a little story told about the illustrious Bob Taylor. A young man came into his office to talk to the governor. He introduced himself and the governor said, "Have a seat." And in a few minutes he spoke up and said, "Governor, I am the son-in-law of Mr. So-and-So." He said, "Then have two seats." The young man thought perhaps that would help his case with the governor. And it might have, but it will not work that way in the judgment day. In the judgment day the Lord will take each of us and judge us according to how we have lived and how we have served him.

There are a number of parables that the Lord spoke that teach this fearful responsibility. He tells us about ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom to return. They carried on this occasion. Five had not brought sufficient oil, and when the bridegroom came, they turned to the others and said, "Give us of your oil, for our lights are going out." But they answered, "We cannot do that, go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves." And while they were gone, the bridegroom came, and the door was closed, and they were not permitted to enter. Now in the judgment day we cannot turn to a good neighbor, or a good father, or good mother, or son, or daughter, and say, "Give me some of your righteousness." No, you cannot do that in the judgment day. You cannot call upon someone else to help you then, but each one of us must stand alone before God. Again he tells us about a master, who going away gave one man five talents, to one man two, and to another one. The man with five talents made five more; the man with two talents made two; the man with one digged a hole and hid it. He did not steal it; he did not misuse it; he gave it back to the master. On returning, the master might have said, "I gave you eight talents; you made seven. That is pretty good. All of you enter into the joys of the Lord." But he did not say that. He took each man--"What did you do? What did you do? What did you do?" And that is the way it is going to be in the judgment day.

Well, I am glad it is that way. I am glad that God made it so that I can do something about my salvation. I would not like to think that we have to depend upon what some of my brethren do and how some of them live, to get to heaven. I know I have many good brethren throughout the country who are loyal servants of the Lord. But on the other hand, there are a great many people who call themselves members of the church, servants of the Lord, expecting to go to heaven when they die, who are living rather careless and indifferent lives. And I am glad that my salvation does not depend upon what they do, but my salvation depends upon what I as an individual shall do. May the good Lord help us to feel keenly our individual responsibility to God.

Years ago Brother Racoon John Smith gave up the faith in which he had been cradled and began preaching the truth. His mother said, "John, why did you do it?" He said, "Mother, if you will guarantee me an entrance through the pearly portals into the courts of glory, I will go back and preach the old doctrine to the best of my ability." She said, "John, I cannot do that, you must answer for yourself." John knew that and we ought to know that some day we will stand before God and answer for ourselves. If you are not a Christian, will you arise now, meet your own personal responsibility and accept salvation upon the terms of the gospel?

SALVATION

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on February 14, 1960 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

In Romans 13:11 Paul said, "Already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed." Salvation is a wonderful word, especially to Christians, because it means so much to Christians. The Lord has given us a beautiful world as our home while we live here in the flesh. And it is bountifully filled with blessings for us. Even this morning with all the snow, along with its inconveniences, we have a wonderful world to enjoy. But with all these blessings and this beautiful home, we also suffer trials and tribulations, sorrow, pain and death. Salvation to us means to be saved from all these things. The Lord has promised us another world free from the sorrows and the trials and the temptations that we encounter in this life and a world where we shall never die. Now this is what it means to be finally saved.

In the first place, salvation means to be saved from the grave. In the second place, it includes to be saved from our past sins, or to enjoy the forgiveness of our past sins. And finally, it means to be saved eternally in heaven. In I Cor. 15:21 Paul said, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." All men shall die as a consequence of Adam's sin. We are not guilty of his sin, but we do suffer in this life as a consequence of his sin, and we are all going to die because of Adam's sin. As a mother suffers when her lawless son has been put in prison, she is not guilty of the sin or the crime that he has committed, but nevertheless she suffers as a consequence of his sin. So, death came upon the entire human race. We expect to die; all of us expect to die some day. But because of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we all also expect to be raised from the grave. We expect to be delivered from the power of death and the grave. Both good and bad, the Bible teaches, will be raised from the grave. In John 5:28 Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Now this part of our salvation is unconditional. As we are going to die and cannot do anything about it, so likewise we are going to be raised from the grave whether we want to be raised or not.

Salvation also includes the forgiveness of our past sins. Peter spoke of them as our old sins. In II Peter 1:9, after he had named certain Christian graces that we should add to our faith, he said, "For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins." Now we are cleansed from our old sins, sins that we have committed before we became Christians, when we obeyed the gospel. That is, when we believed on the Lord, repented of our sins, and were baptized into Christ. A man might buy groceries for a while on credit because he is out of a job, and then a little later he may find work and begin to pay cash for his groceries. But the old debt is still against him and he must finally go back and pay for the things that he bought on credit. Even though he is now paying cash for all that he buys, he must still pay his old debt. So a man on becoming a Christian, ceasing to follow the old life, turning over a new leaf, so to speak, living an honorable new life, must not forget that he must get forgiveness of his old sins, sins that he committed before he became a Christian. Salvation, therefore, includes being saved from our past sins.

Now this part of our salvation is conditional. Paul said in Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." The grace of God that provided salvation for all men was the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. (John 3:16.) God's grace provided salvation for all men. But this does not mean that all men will be saved, because all men will not accept the salvation that God's grace has provided for him. Paul said in Heb. 5:9, "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." Man therefore enjoys the forgiveness of his old sins or his past sins when he obeys the gospel of the Lord Jesus. He is the author of salvation to those who obey him. Now our question is, "What must we do that we might obey the Lord Jesus and that he might become the author of our salvation?" Well, in the first place we must hear the gospel. You remember when the angel appeared to Cornelius, as we read in Acts 10 and 11, the angel instructed him to send to Joppa where he would find Peter, who "shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved." (Acts 11:13,14.) In other words, Peter will preach the gospel to you, you will hear the gospel and learn what you must do to be saved. Now this is why Christ commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all the world, that men might hear the gospel, that they might believe in the Lord and understand what God wants them to do to become a Christian. And in hearing the gospel faith is produced in man's heart. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 that "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And in Hebrews 11:6 he says, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." The question might be raised, "What must I believe to be saved?" The answer is, you must believe the gospel; I must believe the gospel. And then the question is, "Must I believe what you preach in order to be saved?" Well, if I preach the gospel you must believe what I preach to be saved. If I am not preaching the gospel you do not have to believe what I preach to be saved. When any preacher tells you that you do not have to believe what he preaches to be saved, he thereby admits that he is not preaching the gospel. But we must believe the gospel. And Paul tells us there is one gospel and if a man perverts that gospel or preaches another gospel, heaven's curses will rest upon him, man or angel. (Gal. 1:6-10.)

In the next place, man must repent of his sins. Paul tells us in Acts 17:30, "God...commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." But you ask, "What is repentance? There is a little story that Jesus told in Matt. 21:28 that pretty well defines repentance. He told us about a father who had two sons. He said to the boys, "Go work today in the vineyard." One of the boys said, "I will not; but afterwards he repented and went." Now what did that boy do? Well, he simply changed his mind. He doubtless got to thinking about the matter and because of his respect and his love for his father he regretted that he had refused to obey him. So he changed his mind and did go work in the vineyard. Now that is what it means to repent. Repent toward God. Paul tells us in II Cor. 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance." That is, our love for God and our faith in him will lead us to turn away from serving Satan, to turn away from the old life to serve the Lord and to do that which is good and right in his sight. Reformation is not repentance, but reformation is the fruit of repentance. When the boy repented and did go work in the garden, you see the fruit of his repentance. John the Baptist called upon the Pharisees and the Sadducees to "bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance." When you see a man turning over a new leaf, turning away from his old life, and beginning to serve the Lord day by day, and living a good Christian life, you see the fruit of his repentance.

Next, a man must confess his faith in the Lord Jesus. Jesus said in Matt. 10:32-33, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven." He went on to say that if we are ashamed to confess him before men that he will be ashamed to confess us before his Father who is in heaven. Paul tells us in Romans 10:10, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Of course, we under-

stand that man confesses the Lord as long as he lives. He confesses that he believes that Jesus is the Christ before he is baptized. And by the life that he lives, by the service he renders to the Lord, he confesses him as his Lord and Master as long as he lives. Then, he must be baptized into Christ. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." In Acts 2:38 at the conclusion of Peter's sermon on Pentecost he said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter also tells us in I Peter 3:21, when speaking about Noah being saved in the ark, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Paul tells us in Gal. 3:26-27, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." This is the dividing line, even as the waters of the flood separated Noah and his family from the old world and the corruption that was in the world, so by faith we are baptized into Christ, made new creatures, born again. You remember Paul said in II Cor. 5:17, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things have passed away; behold, they are become new." When therefore a man believes on the Lord, repents of his sins, and is baptized into Christ the Lord forgives him of all his past sins.

But we are not in heaven yet. Although we have enjoyed the forgiveness of our past sins, we still live on the earth and we are subject to temptation and we can still sin and disobey God. Our faith can be shipwrecked or destroyed and we can go back into the world and serve the devil; we can fall from grace and be lost. So the question is, "What must we do that we may be eternally saved?" In the first place, I would suggest that the Christian must endure whatever hardships and trials come his way in order to live the Christian life. In Matt. 24:12, Jesus said, "Because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Paul said, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:58.) The early Christians endured a great deal. Sometimes they were thrown to the lions; sometimes they were burned at the stake, and they were persecuted in many ways. But they suffered all of these trials and hardships and even death rather than to deny their Lord and turn back to the world and serve Satan. Our suffering today cannot be compared to the suffering of the people in the early days of the church. And yet sometimes how little we let hinder us from serving our Lord. And how we complain because we have to suffer a few things for our Lord. Some people think that the Lord places too great a sacrifice or too great a price on salvation and they are not willing to make the sacrifice or endure the shame and reproach necessary to serve the Lord. But we must endure in the Christian life.

Next, we must continue to believe on the Lord and be faithful in his service. As we read a moment ago, "Already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed." Jesus said in Rev. 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." In Heb. 10:37-38 the apostle said, "For yet a little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith: and if ye shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him." The Lord intends that we continue faithful in his service. As a servant may be unfaithful to his master, as a husband may be unfaithful to his wife, so the Christian can be unfaithful to the Lord and turn back to serve Satan and be lost. The Bible teaches that we must be faithful all along the way.

Finally, when a man sins after he becomes a Christian, he must repent of his sins and he must confess his sins unto God. John tells us in I John 1:6-10, "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sins. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. IF we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." These words were addressed to people who were already Christians. The apostle is teaching that when we stumble along the way, when Satan leads us to sin, we should confess our sins unto the Lord and ask God to forgive us as we repent of our sins. Then we have the assurance that the Lord will forgive us of our sins.

If we would finally enter into life eternal we must endure whatever trials and hardships come our way in serving the Lord. We must serve him faithfully every day unto the end; we must repent of our sins and acknowledge our sins to him when we fall by the wayside. If we do these things, then when we die he will take us to the eternal home of the soul and we will enjoy eternal life in the world that shall never end. We can say with the apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." Now that is what it means to be saved; that is what salvation means to us. A resurrection from the grave, cleansing us of our old sins, forgiving us as we stumble along the way, and finally life eternal in heaven.

WHY WE SHOULD GIVE

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on November 8, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

Today I shall talk to you about the subject of giving, not because I feel that this church needs the lesson so much, but it is a Bible subject and I suppose all of us feel the need to be reminded of our duty in this matter occasionally. We fail to often because we are not taught as we ought to be concerning many things the Lord has required of us. I think one reason that brethren give more liberally now than they did a few years ago is because brethren have been taught better concerning the matter of giving.

It has been estimated that of the thirty-eight parables spoken by the Lord, sixteen of these relate to the subject of giving. And that very fact indicates the importance and the emphasis the Lord places upon this subject. Our giving, of course, should be done in a dignified way. We should not resort to clap-trap methods, bazaars, quilting parties, suppers, and such like to raise money for the Lord's work. Neither the Lord nor his church are beggars. And we should give in a dignified way and not as though we were beggars. When the church is taught properly, the brethren will give freely, liberally and consistently.

The New Testament does not require the Christian to tithe. In I Cor. 16:2, Paul said, "Let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper." In II Cor. 9:7, "Let each man do (give) according as he hath purposed in his heart." In II Cor. 8:12, "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to the man hath, and not according as he hath not." From these scriptures we understand that a man's gift to God today is not measured by giving a tenth as in the Old Testament, but by his love for his Lord.

The Lord has given the church a work to perform. In Acts 20:35, Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, "In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." In I Cor. 9:14, "Even so did the Lord ordain that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel." We understand from these scriptures that the Lord has placed upon the church the responsibility to remember the poor, to help the needy, the widows and the orphans, and to support the gospel. Whatever is necessary to do the thing commanded of the Lord is divinely authorized. And certainly money is quite often necessary to do the command of the Lord. As we give more, we can do more in helping the needy and in preaching the gospel. And there is so much that needs to be done all over the world. I suppose hardly a week passes but calls come from neglected fields for help to send preachers into these areas. But we cannot answer all of them, simply because we do not have sufficient funds to do so. And it may be that we do not have sufficient funds because we do not give as much as we can and ought to.

It will help us to remember that God is the greatest giver of all givers. Paul said in Acts 17:25, "He himself giveth to all life and breath and all things." In I Tim. 6:17, "God giveth thee richly all things to enjoy." In James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of light." And then, of course, all of us know John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." God does not ask us to give because he needs our gifts. In I Chron. 29:11, we read, "All that is in the heavens and in the earth

is thine." And Paul in Acts 17:24 said, "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Someone has put it in these words:

"My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands.
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full; He hath wealth untold."

Now the question is, "Why does God want us to give?" In the first place man becomes like the God he worships. He imitates his God's character. Giving is an act of worship, and when we make sacrifice for the Lord and for his work, we are developing that God-like trait of love and unselfishness. And so in raising money, as someone has well said, the Lord is also raising men. With wealth comes the responsibility of using it right. It is as important that we spend our money in the right way as it is that we make it in the right way. As it would be wrong for us to gain wealth by frauding our fellowman, by cheating or by stealing, so it would be wrong for us to use what we make in the wrong way and for the wrong purposes. A man's character may be marked by the way he spends his money, as well as by the way he makes his money. Someone has well said, "What a young man makes in the day goes into his pockets; what he spends in the night goes into his character." God therefore, knows that giving cheerfully to the needy for the advancement of his Cause upon the earth is building Christian character.

Unfortunately, some professed Christians spend freely for big dinners and for shows and soft drinks and sometimes hard drinks, fine clothes and things of that sort, but they give stingily to help the poor and to support the gospel. Someone has said that many feed their dogs from the scraps that are left over from dinner, and likewise some men give to the Lord and the Lord's work the same way. That is, they give the few scraps that are left over after they have spent most on themselves.

Giving is sacrificing, at least it ought to be. And we sacrifice for the things and for the people that we love best. Mother often deprives herself of many things, that daughter might have more. And father finds delight in his work because it makes it possible for him to send son to college. You know the Lord Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there is your heart also." Someone has said, "Give until it hurts," but it would hurt some people to give a dime when they could give abundantly. Religion that is not worth sacrificing for is worthless to us. So let us remember that giving is sacrificing and when our heart is in our gift we will give cheerfully and liberally.

In the next place, activity is essential to life. When an individual ceases to give or to work he dies spiritually, just as does the strong arm of a man wither and lose its strength when he does not use it. An active, live church supports an active program. It grows as it increases in good works, just as a man becomes strong physically when he works and exercises. For example, a locomotive is of little value to a railroad if it cannot pull more than itself, and then sometimes stop when you blow the whistle. What good would be a locomotive to a railroad if it could pull only itself, and not a good string of cars also. And yet I have seen a good many churches throughout the land that could hardly take care of their local obligations. They are not interested in helping the poor; they are not interested in preaching the gospel; about all they are interested in is pulling themselves. So remember, activity is essential to life, and giving is essential to activity in the Lord's work.

Furthermore, giving is fellowship. Paul commended the church in Philippi because it had fellowship with him time and again. When he left Philippi and went down to Thessalonica they sent help to him. While he was a prisoner over in Rome they sent Epaphroditis, a messenger of the church, with help for Paul. And so it is today. When we give we have fellowship in the Lord's work. For example, if you have bought stock in a business concern, you immediately become interested in the stock market. The possibility is that when the paper comes out in the morning or evening, the first thing you do is to read the report on the stock market. Why is that? Because you have invested, you have an interest there. You feel that you are a partner in the business. You want to see if you have made or lost money. And the Lord said, "Where your treasure is there is your heart also."

There is a story about a man who was seen one day to deliberately drop a dollar in the crack of a boardwalk. And someone asked, "Why did you do that?" "Well," he said, "I dropped a quarter through that crack accidentally. I did not think it was worth the time to break up the sidewalk in order to get only a quarter. So, I put the dollar under there also to make it worth while." And it may be that that is why some people today are not much interested in the church and in the Lord's work. They have not invested sufficiently. So giving is fellowship; it is partnership, and the more we give the more we do, and the more interested we are in the church and the Lord's work.

Then, of course, we know that Christians are stewards in God's service. In I Peter 4:10, Peter said, "According as each one has received the gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." A steward is one who manages the business of another. He works not only for himself, but he works for the man who owns the business. You remember Jesus gave us a parable concerning a man who was going away and he left one man with five talents, another man with two talents and another man with one talent. The man who had five talents made five more; the man who had two made two more; but the man who had received only one dug a hole and hid it. He did not steal it; he did not misuse it; he did not throw it away; he simply did not use it. He was a poor steward. He gave it back to the master and the master called him a wicked and lazy servant. So the Lord wants us to feel and to know that we are stewards in God's hands. All that we have belongs to God and he will some day ask us to give an account of how we have used what belongs to God. Jesus also tells us about a man who planted a vineyard and let it out. When that time came to receive his share, he sent his servants but they rejected them and beat them and sent them away. He then sent his son and they also shamefully treated him. Now what do you think of people who would treat another man's property like that? But I would not be surprised but many of us are guilty in that respect. The Lord has blessed us with what we have; he has blessed us so wonderfully, and still we feel like, "It is mine, Lord." But the Lord wants us to understand that we are stewards in his hands and that we are to use it for his glory and for the good of mankind. And if we do not, he will not say when he comes back, "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in a few things, now enter into the joys of thy Lord." The question is, will he be able to say that about us? Will he be able to say, "I entrusted you with some of the material wealth of the world and you used it well. Well done, good and faithful servant, come on into heaven and I will entrust to you greater things." Well he will not be able to say that unless we realize that we are God's servants and prove faithful to him."

Finally, we ought to consider the returns. You know, the Lord Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall he give unto your bosom." Now it is hard for us to believe that, isn't it? "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give unto your bosom." The Lord was

giving us a picture of one man measuring out grain to another. He pours it into the measuring container, then he presses it down and he pours in some more, then he shakes it together and pours in some more and then he will run it over. Now that is what the Lord says about those who give freely to him. But the question is, do we believe it? Do we put that much trust in the Lord? There is no investment that man can make in this world that is so sure and so secure as when we lay up treasures in heaven. There is a little story about a beggar many years ago in the eastern countries, who saw what he thought was the king approaching him, and he was about to ask the king to give him a gift, but as the king approached him, he asked the beggar first to give him a gift. And so the beggar reached into his little bag and picked out the smallest grain that he could find and gave it to the king. And the next morning he looked into his bag and found a tiny piece of gold, the same size of the grain that he had given the day before. And then, of course, he wished that he had given the king all that he had. So let us remember, when we give (1) we are building Christian character, (2) we are sacrificing for the Lord's work, (3) that giving is activity and without activity, we die spiritually, (4) that giving is fellowship, (5) that we are God's stewards and all that we have belongs to God.

The secret of real giving is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians when he was encouraging them to give bountifully for the poor saints around Jerusalem. He was making a collection to send to the poor saints around Jerusalem from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia and throughout Galatia and other places, and in order to encourage the brethren in Corinth to give liberally he told them about the brethren in Macedonia. He said they gave beyond what they were able to give. They gave more than he really expected them to give. Why? Because, "first they gave their own selves to the Lord." Now I think that is the secret of all our service and of all our giving to the Lord. I know preachers for a long time would not preach on this subject much, and when they did people did not like it. But today I am glad brethren do not resent lessons on this subject. Most of us appreciate the fact that we need to be reminded of our responsibilities. When a man really gives his heart and his soul to the Lord and seeks first God's kingdom and makes that his first interest in life, it becomes easy for him to give cheerfully and liberally unto the Lord.

PRAYER

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on December 13, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

Prayer is one of the greatest joys and privileges, as well as a duty, that belongs to a Christian. And yet how often we neglect to pray. We think of the great Bible characters such as Abraham and Moses and David, Daniel, Elijah and Jeremiah, Paul and Peter and even the Lord Jesus Christ, as being men of prayer. In fact it would be difficult to think of these men as being negligent in prayer. Prayer, simply stated, is talking to God. In prayer we praise the Lord; we thank him for the blessings that he has given us; we make petition to him for other blessings; we confess our sins and ask pardon of God. Prayer is truly the Christian communication line with heaven. It would be a fearful thing even to contemplate if we had no communication with heaven, no way at all to contact Almighty God. James tells us in the fourth chapter and the eighth verse, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." And what better way can one draw nigh to God then through prayer? In Luke 18 we are told that the Lord spoke a parable to the end that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." All of us in a lifetime experience joys and sorrows, periods of prosperity and adversity, health and sickness and victories and defeats, and sometimes when the burdens of life press heavily upon us it seems that we are unable to bear them. And many people find it so easy to complain and to find fault when as the Lord said, "We should pray and do not faint." For the Lord wants us to talk to him. Just as the people came to him while he was on the earth and talked to him about their trials, their problems, and he was always willing to listen, so the Lord wants us to talk to him today. We sing a beautiful song sometimes that suggests, "Tell it to Jesus." Some years ago I listened to a good lady as she unburdened all of her disappointments and heartaches in life to Brother Marshall Keeble, and after he listened patiently for a while he answered, "Sister, your trouble is you are trying to carry all of your burdens yourself when the Lord said, "Put them on me." And that is exactly what the person does who neglects to pray. Paul tells us in Heb. 4:16, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help us in the time of need." He does not want us to wait until we see a tornado approaching, or the doctor says that we must go to the hospital tomorrow for an operation, or some financial disaster comes along in our lives, before we begin to pray. But let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace that we may find grace to help us in the time of need.

Why should not a Christian take God into his life as his partner and his helper? Why should not a Christian mother ask the Lord for help in rearing her children? Why should not a Christian father ask the Lord to help him in guiding his household? Why should not Christian business men ask God to help them in their business? Paul tells us in Phil. 4:6, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Now that should include home life, social life, business and even recreation. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

We should pray often because God has promised to hear our prayers and to answer our prayers. In John 14:14 Jesus said, "If ye will ask anything in my name, that will I do." But I have heard people say, "Well, I have asked the Lord for certain things and the Lord did not answer my prayer." And I suppose that all of us could say that to some degree. But there is always a good reason why the Lord did not give us that for which we asked. The Lord has laid down certain conditions of prayer in the Bible and we must recognize these when we pray.

MK. 11:24
James 1:6

In the first place, in Mark 11:24 Jesus said, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." James tells us in James 1:6, "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed." The prayer that is offered without faith will not reach the throne of God. The Lord wants us to believe that God is, that God can hear our prayers and that he will hear our prayers and that he can and will answer our prayers. (Heb. 11:6)

In the next place, the Bible teaches that we must pray, "Thy will be done and not mine." In I John 5:14, John said, "And this is the boldness which ye have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." You remember in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, "Father...take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will but what thou wilt." You know, God knows so much more than we do; he is so much wiser than we are. In Isa. 55:8 he said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Many times a little child might ask mother to let him play with a razor or a pair of scissors, but she will not let him have it. It is not that she does not want to answer his prayer, not because she does not love the little fellow, but because she knows so much more than he does. And when we pray we should say, "Father, thy will be done, not mine."

(James 4:2) In James 4:2 we read, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." And in James 4:3, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss; that ye may spend it in your own pleasure." The motive is wrong, and if we ask God for certain things with the wrong motive, God has not promised to answer our prayers. A man might pray, "Lord, give me a million dollars." Do you think the Lord is going to give him a million dollars? That would be a selfish prayer, that he might spend it upon his own pleasure.

The Bible also teaches that when we pray and ask God to forgive us of our sins, we must also forgive those who sin against us. Jesus prayed and taught his disciples to pray, "Father, forgive us our debts (or our sins) as we have forgiven our debtors." In other words, when we ask God to forgive us, we should pray, "Father, forgive me of my sins just like I have forgiven those who have sinned against me." That may be pretty hard to do sometimes, but the Lord has promised to forgive us of our sins only if we are willing to forgive those who sin against us. But none of us will ever have to forgive our fellowman as much as God will have to forgive us if we ever get to heaven.

It is interesting to know that God often gives us more than we ask of him. He may not always give us exactly that for which we ask, but in many cases he will give us much more than we ask of him. In Eph. 3:20-21, Paul said, "Now unto him, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory and the church and in all generations forever and ever." "Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we think or ask." In Acts 10 we read about a man named Cornelius. He prayed to God every day, and one day God answered his prayer by sending an angel to Cornelius and telling him where he could find the apostle Peter who would tell him what to do to be saved. Now I do not know what Cornelius was asking of the Lord in that prayer, but he doubtless received a great deal more than he had asked of the Lord. Over in Philippi we find Lydia and her household on the riverside in a little prayer meeting. I do not know what Lydia was praying for, but I am quite sure that Lydia got far more than that for which she asked from the Lord. For the Lord brought the apostle Paul and his company across Asia Minor, on to Troas, and there he saw the vision of a man in Macedonia beckoning, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." He took a ship and sailed across the sea, landed at Neapolis and then went on to Philippi and there he found Lydia and her household on the riverside praying. The Lord

answered her prayer. And I am quite sure the Lord gave her far more than she ever asked of the Lord.

Sometime people say, "For what shall I pray?" Well, the Bible tells us something along that line. In I Tim. 2:1 Paul said we should pray "for kings and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godness and gravity." Sometimes people talk about the power of their votes and what they are going to do when the next election comes up, and sometimes we do not blame them. But we should also remember the power of prayer. It is easy for us to criticize those who rule over us, but it is far more profitable for us to pray for them. I do not doubt that the greatest power for good in all of the land is in the prayers of the saints. The Lord can overrule all things for the good of his people. Paul said, "We ought to pray for those who rule over us that we might be able to live tranquil and quiet lives."

The Lord also wants us to pray for our enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Jesus prayed for those who crucified him, and Stephen prayed for those who were stoning him to death.

We should also, of course, pray for our brethren. Jesus prayed for Peter on one occasion. In III John 2 we read, "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers." Paul so often said, "Brethren, pray for me." In II Thess. 3:1 he said "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Lord of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as it is also with you."

And we should pray for those that are lost. I think that we are negligent in this particular. I notice that our brethren pray for the rulers of the land; for our preachers at home and abroad and they ask the Lord to continue to bless us, but we so often forget the people who are not Christians. Abraham prayed for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Paul prayed for Israel. Jesus even prayed for those who crucified him and asked God to forgive them. Of course, we cannot ask God to save them in their disobedience to his gospel. The Lord's prayer was answered on the day of Pentecost when the people had an opportunity to hear the apostles announce the terms of salvation to all lost men everywhere.

There are many things we might say about prayer, but regardless of what else we might say that would encourage us to pray, let us remember that the Lord has never promised to accept prayer in lieu of obedience to the gospel. The idea that a man can become a Christian simply through prayer gave rise to the old mourner's bench. I am quite sure they were sincere in this practice, but the Lord has not promised to make of us Christians simply through prayer. Cornelius was praying in yonder Caesarea but the Lord sent an angel who told him where he could find a gospel preacher who would tell him what to do to become a Christian. When Lydia and her household were praying on the riverside, the Lord sent Paul and Silas to preach to them. The Lord will help a man who is a sinner, seeking to know the truth, learn the truth, as he did for Cornelius and Lydia and her household. But the Lord commands all men to obey the gospel, to be born again.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 12, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station W L A C at 8:05 P. M.

I am reading from the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, the second chapter, beginning with the fourteenth verse, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting to them that hear. Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (II Tim. 2:14-19.)

I am sure that all of us recognize that the Bible is the most remarkable book in all the world. Without it we would know very little about God; we would know nothing about his love and his mercy and his goodness. Without the Bible we would know nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit or the angels in heaven. The Bible teaches man that he is an eternal spirit. It reveals the way of life in this world and man's eternal destiny in the world to come. Nevertheless, the Bible is often neglected; even by many who claim to love and to believe the Bible.

Some say they cannot understand the Bible. Some tell us that they can prove anything in the world they want to by the Bible. One day an old man was playing his fiddle when an infidel passed by and said, "Sir, your Bible is somewhat like your fiddle. You can take the fiddle and play any tune that you want to play with it. And you can take the Bible and you can prove anything you want to by the Bible!" But the old man thought for a moment and he said, "Sir, it is not that way. When I pull the bow across the strings it gives one tone. When I do it the second time, the third time, the fourth time, every time it will give the same tone. But do you know what it is that makes those different tunes that I play? That is when I begin to finger with the strings up here." And so it is with God's word. It will always teach all men the same thing all the time. You cannot, when you properly divide God's word, teach any doctrine you want to teach. And all the theories and doctrines that are taught in the world have more or less come about as a result of men laying their unholy hands upon God's word, and they change it to play the different tunes as the old man did when he put his fingers on the strings of the fiddle.

I read a moment ago from II Timothy 2:15. The King James version reads, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Now if there is a right way to divide God's word, there is also a wrong way to divide God's word. The apostle Peter, in II Peter 3:16, spoke of the "ignorant and unsteadfast who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction." The apostle Paul tells us in II Corinthians 4:2, that he, with the other apostles, did not handle the word of God deceitfully. We have long recognized that one of the richest sources for religious error today is the misunderstanding of God's word, a misconception, of the scriptures, or failure to rightly divide the word of God. Some people think that it is all right to teach many doctrines, that God did not intend for us to understand the Bible alike anyway. But to say that we cannot understand the Bible and to say that we cannot understand it alike, reflects upon the wisdom, the power and the mercy of God. Either God could reveal his will

to us in the Bible, so that man could understand it and understand it alike, or he could not. If we say he could not, we reflect upon his power. If we say that God did not, though he could, we reflect upon his goodness and his mercy, for he teaches us to understand his word and to be of one mind and one accord. So we can only conclude that God was able to reveal his will to us in the Bible so that we can understand it, and that we can understand it alike.

When we read the Bible there are certain questions that we should always raise if we want to understand it properly. In the first place, let us ask, Who is doing the speaking? Is it Moses? Is it Abraham? Is it one of the prophets of the Old Testament? Is it the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it one of the apostles? Who is doing the talking in this that I am now reading? And then the second question should be, To whom is he speaking? Is it the Lord talking to people who lived before the days of the flood? Is the Lord talking to Israel as a nation? Is it the Lord talking to people who are not Christians or to people who are Christians? And then the third question is, In what age or dispensation did he live? Did he live before the days of the flood? Did he live during the Mosaical dispensation? Or, did he live in the Christian age? Part of the Bible is addressed to the patriarchs who lived long before God gave the law of Moses to Israel; part of it is addressed to Israel and part is addressed to the sinner, teaching him the importance of becoming a Christian and teaching him how to become a Christian. Part of the Bible is addressed to the Christian, instructing him in the way of righteousness; and then part of the Bible is addressed to the erring Christian that he might know how he might be restored to the fellowship of God's people and to the grace of God. For example, God told Noah to build an ark, but God does not expect us to build an ark. God told Abraham to take his son out upon Mount Moriah and offer him in sacrifice, but God does not expect us to do that. Israel, during the Mosaical dispensation, kept the tabernacle services, the covenant of circumcision, the feast of the pass-over, etc., but God does not expect us to do these things. So, it is necessary that we know who is doing the talking, to whom he is speaking, and in what dispensation or age did he live.

We recognize that the Bible is divided into two grand divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. And then in these two Testaments there are three great dispensations or religious ages. First, the Patriarchal dispensation began with Adam and continued over a period of 2500 years down to Mount Sinai when God gave the law of Israel through Moses. Second, the Mosaical dispensation, or the Jewish age, began at Mount Sinai and continued over a period of 1500 years until Jesus died on the cross and nailed it to the cross. The Christian dispensation began with the Lord Jesus and will continue until time shall be no more.

In the Patriarchal age the altar was the center of worship, and the fathers of the tribes of the families served at the altar. And that is why it is called the Patriarchal dispensation. You know the word patriarch means father, and it was the age when the fathers served their families in making their offering from time to time and from place to place. You read quite often of Abraham stopping here and yonder to build an altar unto the Lord. Someone has well said that you could trace the journeys of Abraham by the smoke that curled up from his altars. So we call that the Patriarchal dispensation. The Mosaical dispensation began at Mount Sinai when God gave the law to Israel and Israel was governed by the law of Moses, for this law was given to Israel and to Israel only. In Deuteronomy 5:2 Moses said to Israel, "Hear, O Israel...Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." They were the people that Moses was leading through the wilderness. He did not give it to their fathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he gave it "to us, even all of us, who are alive this day." They were the people to whom Moses was then speaking.

When we come to the Christian dispensation, the Christian is governed by the law of Christ, which is the gospel of Christ. John tells us in II John 9, "Who-soever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God." Not the teaching of Moses or the prophets or the Old Testament, but "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." In Colossians 2:14, Paul said, "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us...He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." And when in writing to the Ephesians on this subject in Ephesians 2:14, he said, "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man (that is the church) so making peace; and might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and he came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone." (Eph. 2:14-20.)

In the Galatian letter, chapter three, beginning in verse sixteen, Paul in talking about this matter of the ending of the law of Moses and the beginning of the gospel of Christ, said, "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say: A covenant beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise. What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. But the scriptures shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be to them that believe. But before faith came (that is the gospel) we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law has become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For we are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ, There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond or free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." Now let us sum up that which we have read. Paul reminds us that God made a promise to Abraham. We find that promise recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis and the first few verses. When God first called Abraham out of his father's country and he said, "I will make of thee a great nation...I will bless them that bless thee; and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Now that is the promise that Paul was talking about. And when he said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," he was talking about the Lord Jesus Christ who was indeed a descendent of Abraham. Then he added, four hundred and thirty years after God made that promise to Abraham, that through his seed all the nations would be blessed, the law of Moses was given at Mount Sinai. He raised the question, "Did the Lord disannul that promise so as to make it of none effect?" He answered, "No, but the law was added because of transgression, till the seed should come, which seed was Christ." Now we are sons of God, not by virtue of the fact that we are children of Abraham, but we are sons of God by faith, in Christ Jesus. "For as many of us as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. And if

you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise. Now in Christ Jesus whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, we are one man in Christ Jesus, and of Christ's, then Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

Paul tells us in the Hebrew letter as he quoted from Jeremiah 31:31 that God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. For had the first covenant been faultless then would no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them he said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according with the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and into their hearts also will I write them; and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." And then Paul says, summing up what Jeremiah prophecied, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old, but that which is becoming old and waxeth age is nigh unto vanishing away."

Now from these scriptures we understand Christians do not serve God according to God's law during the Patriarchal dispensation and we do not serve God according to God's law with Israel, the law that he gave at Mt. Sinai through Moses. But today we serve God according to the law of Christ. Paul called it the law of Christ when he said, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2.) In Romans 1:16, he said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." And then he goes on to say that in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God. Not an attribute of God's character, but in the gospel is revealed God's way of making a man righteous. And that is the only place where it is revealed.

That is as far as we can go with the lesson today. Next Sunday, the Lord willing; we will talk about the New Testament, and show how we should properly divide it, if we would understand God's will. Someone has referred to the Patriarchal age when man did not have as much light as he had later on, as the Starlight Age of the world. And when he gave the law of Moses and gave man a little more light, we have the Moonlight Age of the gospel. But it is our blessed privilege to live in the Sunlight Age of the gospel. For we know more about God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know about salvation, about heaven and hell. In the gospel God teaches us what to do to become Christians. As Jesus sent his apostles into the world he said, "Go...preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. You will not find the answer in the law of Moses; you will not find it in the Patriarchal dispensation; you will find it in the law of Christ.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD - II

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 19, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

On last Sunday we talked to you on the subject "Rightly Dividing the Word of God." In II Timothy 2:15, the apostle Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We pointed out in this lesson that there are two grand divisions in the Bible--the Old Testament and the New Testament; that in these Testaments there are revealed three great religions: the Patriarchal, then the Mosaical and the Christian. The Patriarchal dispensation began with Adam and continued until Mount Sinai, over a period of about 2500 years. The Mosaical began with Mount Sinai and continued until Jesus died on the cross, over a period of about 1500 years. And, of course, the Christian dispensation began with the Lord Jesus and shall continue until the judgment day.

We pointed out also that when we read the Bible we should ask, (1) Who is doing the talking? (2) To whom is he speaking? and (3) In what age or dispensation did he live? We recognize that all of the Bible should be accepted because the Bible is God's book. But not all of the Bible is applicable to us today. The Lord does not expect us to keep the covenant of circumcision, the passover feast and other feasts, and the sabbath day that he gave to the Jews under the law of Moses, and many other such like things. We do not mean that the Old Testament should be discarded because the Old Testament still serves many good purposes. But we do mean that we cannot find the answer for man today to the question, "What must I do to be saved? in the Old Testament. Paul tells us in Hebrews 1:1 that "God having of old times spoken unto the fathers and the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us through his Son." Though the Lord spoke to the people through dreams and through prophets and "in divers manners" in ancient times, today he speaks to us through his Son. You remember on the Mount of Transfiguration when there appeared Moses, and Elijah, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here...I will make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But then it was that the voice from the cloud that overshadowed them spoke and said, "This is my beloved Son, ...hear ye him." The Lord in so many words said, "There was a time when I wanted you to listen to Moses, the great law-giver. There was a time when I wanted you to listen to my prophet; Elijah; but now I want you to listen to my Son."

The Old Testament does serve many good purposes. It reveals to us the origin of man. and the substance of the shadows and types of the Old Testament are revealed in the New Testament. The prophecies of the Old Testament scriptures find their fulfillment in the New Testament and the Old Testament reveals God's dealings with man in ages past. And there are many other good purposes that the Old Testament scriptures serve. Paul said, "They were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (I Cor. 10:11.) But it is necessary for us to come to the New Testament to learn what God wants us to do today. So I want to give most of our attention to the study of the New Testament today.

The first four books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are books of testimony. They tell us about the birth, the life, the teachings, the works and the death and resurrection of our Lord. And as we read them they produce faith in our hearts that Jesus is the Christ. A statement from John found in John 20:30-31 pretty well sums up the purpose, primarily, of these four books. As John was about to conclude his record of the gospel he said, "Many other signs there-

fore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing ye may have life in his name." So John tells us he wrote that book to produce faith in the hearts of people in ages to come, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Had we been present while the Lord Jesus lived upon the earth, had we heard him preach such sermons as the sermon on the mount, had we seen him feed the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, and call Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days, or stilled the waves and winds out on the sea of Galilee, no doubt we would have believed as many did believe. But we believe, nevertheless, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Why do we believe? Because we have the records of these men who did see him and who did hear him. John is saying, "I am not telling you everything that Jesus did and everything that Jesus said, but if you will read and believe what I am saying, you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now that is in harmony with Paul's statement in Romans 10:17, when he said, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." You remember also that Jesus, in his prayer on the night that he was betrayed, as recorded in John 17:20 said, "~~Neither for these only~~ do I pray (that is his immediate disciples) but for them also that believe on me through their word." That would include us also, because we believe on Jesus today through the words of the apostles. Wherever the gospel has not been preached men do not believe in the Lord Jesus. All that we believe about the Lord Jesus is revealed in the Bible. And so, primarily the purpose of these four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is to produce faith in our hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. There is not a man on the face of the earth that knows or believes one thing about the Lord Jesus except the Bible reveals it to him.

The next book is Acts. This book is sometimes called the book of conversions. It is also an inspired history of the early church. Here we learn what the apostles told people to do to become Christians. Three times in this book we find the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Three times the answer is given, and it is not strange that we find the answer is always the same. The apostles told people to believe on the Lord Jesus, to repent of their sins and to be baptized unto the remission of their sins.

On the day of Pentecost, at the conclusion of Peter's sermon, having been convinced that the man they had crucified fifty days before was indeed the Son of God, they cried out, "Brethren, what must we do?" And Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) When the apostle Paul, who was at that time called Saul, was on his way to Damascus to persecute any who had accepted Christianity among the Jews, saw the Lord Jesus on the way, convinced that Jesus of Nazareth who he had previously persecuted, was indeed the Son of God, he raised the question, "What shall I do, Lord?" Jesus told him to go down to the city "and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." He goes down to Damascus and after three days, Ananias, a disciple of the Lord comes to Paul, as the Lord had directed him, and seeing that Paul was now a believer in the Lord and that he was a penitent believer, for he had had three days to think over his past life and his mistakes in persecuting the church and the Lord, and finding him praying, said: "Now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:6-16.) So Paul was told to do the same thing that the people were told to do by Peter on Pentecost--to believe in his heart, to repent of his sins, and to be baptized and wash away his sins.

The third time is found in Acts 16:30. Paul and Silas were in Philippi in prison. They had been beaten with rods and unjustly treated the afternoon before. But Paul and Silas were not discouraged, for at midnight they were singing praises and praying to God. And the Lord answered that prayer with an earthquake that

shook the foundations of the prison-house and the bands fell off the prisoners and the doors came open. The jailor, believing that the prisoners had escaped, drew a sword and was about to kill himself, when Paul said, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." It was a Roman law that should the jailor allow the prisoner to escape he must forfeit his own life. So the jailor, believing that his prisoners were gone, was about to take his own life. But Paul said, "No need to do that, no body is gone; we are all here." Then the jailor came in where Paul and Silas were, took them out and asked the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house." And then they spoke the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house that they might believe. Faith comes by hearing God's word. He taught them what to do to become Christians, and then the jailor in an effort to make amends for the treatment the apostles had received the evening before, washed their stripes, and they went the same hour of the night and were baptized, he and all his household. Then they came back into his house and he set food before them and they all rejoiced, "having believed in God." So, this jailor did what the others did. He believed in his heart; he repented of his sins; and he was baptized into Christ. So, this book primarily serves the purpose to tell a man what to do to become a Christian.

Following the book of Acts we have twenty-one epistles. They are: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I and II and III John, and then Jude. Now all of these epistles, or all of these books, are addressed to Christians. Some of them are addressed to individual Christians like Paul's letter to Philemon and some are addressed to churches. The purpose of these books is pretty well summed up on Paul's statement to Timothy in his first epistle, third chapter, fourteenth verse. Here he said, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth." Paul wrote that letter to Timothy to teach him, that he might teach men how they ought to behave in the church. Not the church building, of course, but how men ought to serve God as Christians. So we can say that these twenty-one letters, beginning with Romans through Jude, serve that purpose primarily. The Christian today can find an answer to his problems somewhere in these twenty-one books. So, if you are a Christian, and you want to know how to live the Christian life, study these epistles that the apostles wrote, or inspired men gave to the early Christians in the long ago.

Finally, we come to the last book in the New Testament, Revelation. In the first part of this book we have seven letters that the Lord Jesus addressed to seven churches throughout Asia. Not seven denominations, but seven churches in different localities throughout the country. We can learn wonderful lessons from the Lord as we read these letters to the seven churches in Asia. Suppose the Lord would send a letter to us, and we knew a week ago that the letter was going to be read today. How would you feel about it? All of us would want to hear earnestly and diligently all that the Lord had to say. Well, the Lord wrote these letters and we should be just as much interested in them as we would should the Lord write such letters to us from heaven.

Besides these letters in Revelation, we read of the final triumph of truth and righteousness, and here we find a picture of the destiny of the human race. We have no disposition of heart to speculate upon many of the things found in Revelation, but we can profit by everything that is written in the book. On one hand God has given us a beautiful picture of heaven and it should be an incentive to all of us to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life. On the other hand, the Lord has given us a horrible picture of the destiny of the devil and his angels and those who serve him in this life. It should also be a warning to us and should

make us strive harder to overcome Satan's temptations and to serve the Lord faithfully in this life. It is such a horrible picture until people sometimes say, "I can hardly believe that there is such a place as hell as described in the Bible, particularly in the book of Revelation. Would God send one of his own creatures to a place like that?"

Strictly speaking, God is not responsible for a man going to hell, but man goes to hell of his own accord. He goes to hell after God does all that he can to save him. But the man who serves the devil and loves the ways of the world and loves unrighteousness, spurns the love of God, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the pleadings of the Holy Spirit through the gospel, turns his back upon it all and deliberately goes in the wrong way. Therefore, he alone is responsible for being lost. He makes his own decision.

Summing up we can say, the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, produce faith in our hearts that Jesus is the Christ. But if you are a believer and you want to know what to do to become a Christian, then read diligently the book of Acts and you will find the answer there. If you are a Christian, you have obeyed the gospel and you want to know what God wants you to do to serve him faithfully, then read the twenty-one epistles and serve God by his word, and the beautiful home pictured in Revelation will be yours to enjoy in the sweet bye and bye.

SAVED BY GRACE

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on July 10, 1960 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

I want to talk to you today about a matter that should be foremost in the thoughts and hearts of all of us. There are great problems that face us in this life, but when we come to face death and to think about eternity, all the problems of this life fade into nothing. I think your presence today indicates that you are interested in the salvation of your souls, and that is really the only thing that matters in this life. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul said, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, that no man should glory." It is unfortunate that there is so much confusion in the world concerning man's salvation. It is unfortunate that there is so much confusion on this subject, Saved by Grace. It is a subject that should thrill the heart of every soul on the face of the earth. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, that no man should glory."

Some people tell us that to be saved by grace means that we have practically nothing to do, but that salvation is almost wholly the work of God. Others tell us that to be saved by grace through faith includes obedience to the gospel of Christ. There are three things mentioned in this passage: salvation, grace and faith. While the word salvation is not found in this passage, it is nevertheless mentioned here. The little word "it" has reference to salvation. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God..." Salvation is the gift of God. Paul tells us in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Salvation is the free gift of God. But we might ask, "In what sense is salvation free?" Well, it is free in the sense that God has provided or has procured salvation for all men. Salvation is provided for us by the Lord, not because of any works of righteousness on the part of man, but salvation is free. God's grace has provided it for us. In Titus 2:11 Paul said, "For the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men." The word grace means unmerited favor. When someone does something for you, just because he loves you, not because he is trying to return a favor or pay an obligation, we call that a matter of grace. I think we could say all the blessings that we receive from God, both temporal and spiritual, come through the grace of God. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the sunshine we enjoy, are all provided by the grace of God. Yet, at the same time we must appropriate these blessings for our own good. We must breathe the air; we must eat the food; we must enjoy the sunshine; we must drink the water. And that is true in the matter of being saved by grace. God's grace provides salvation, but man must appropriate the salvation that God has provided for him. The question, then, might be raised, "What did God do, what great favor did God do for man that made it possible for him to be saved?" And the answer is found in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This was the great favor or grace of God that procured salvation for all men. God did not give his Son to die that we might live because of any works of righteousness on the parts of man; God did not give his Son in sacrifice for our sins because he felt obligated to do it because of anything that man had done, but because he loved us. He loved us so much that he gave his Son to die that we might live. Now this was the grace that provided salvation for all men. In Romans 5:8 Paul tells us that "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In Titus 3:4

he said, "When the kindness of God our Savior, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us." When was that? Well that was when Jesus died for us on the cross. That is when God gave his Son to make the sacrifice as an atonement for our sins, and made it possible for all of us to be saved. Not because of works of righteousness done by man, but through his great mercy and his love for us, God provided the means whereby we might be saved.

Now someone might say, "That means that all men will be saved. Since God's grace has provided salvation for all men, then all men will be saved." No, the Bible does not teach that all men will be saved. Rather, the Bible teaches to the contrary. The Lord Jesus spoke of two ways--one going to heaven and the other, the broad way, going down to destruction. And he tells us that most of the people are going in the wrong direction. So all men will not be saved. Why? Not because God's grace did not provide salvation for all men, but because all men will not accept the salvation that God has procured for us. You might be walking down the street on a cold winter day, and find a poor fellow thinly clad, and you know he is not able to provide means to keep himself warm or to find shelter. And out of the goodness of your heart you take off your overcoat and give it to the poor fellow. Perhaps you do not know him, but he is a fellowman and you do not want to see him freeze to death. He takes the coat and thanks you kindly and you rush on down the street. And in about half an hour you come back and there is the poor fellow still there, still shaking like a leaf in the cold weather, holding the overcoat in his arm, almost frozen to death. You provided the means for him to keep warm, but he did not use it.

Now that is true with reference to salvation. Almighty God has provided salvation for all of us; he has made it possible for every soul on the face of the earth to go to heaven, but all of them are not going to go to heaven for the simple reason that all men will not accept the salvation that God's grace has provided. You know the Lord Jesus said in John 5:40, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "I will give you life, but you will not come to me that ye might have life." You remember also, Jesus said in Matthew 23:37, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" He said, "I wanted to help you, but you would not let me. You would not accept the help that I offered you." Well, that is true with reference to salvation. You remember in Revelation we read of the Lord standing at the door knocking, and he said, "I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." But the Lord is not going to break down the door and come into your heart and your life against your will. But he is ready to come and to bring salvation, to save your soul, if you will but open the door and let him in. If you would but accept the salvation that he has made possible for you and for every man.

Now, the next question that comes in our mind is, "How may a man appropriate this salvation that God's grace has provided for all of us?" The answer is also found in our text. "For by grace have ye been saved, through faith..." God's grace provides salvation; man's faith accepts salvation. Grace is God's part; faith is man's part. And man must exercise the faith in order to accept or appropriate salvation for his own soul's need.

Now another question might rightly be asked here. "What kind of faith is the Bible talking about?" You notice, I did not say what faith, but what kind of faith. There is but one faith as far as the Christian's faith is concerned. In Ephesians 4:4 the apostle said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." There is one

faith as far as the Christian is concerned. In Titus 1:4 Paul speaks of Titus as his true son after the common faith, a faith that was common among all God's people. You remember also, Jude in the third verse of his book exhorts us to contend earnestly for the faith, once for all delivered unto the saints. In Gal. 1:23 Paul talking about the brethren in Judea, said they did not know him by face, but they rejoice that he who once persecuted them now preaches the faith. Well, what faith is that? That is the faith of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing God's word. There is but one gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and when the gospel is preached as the apostles preached the gospel it will produce one faith in our hearts. It will produce the same faith in our hearts that it produced in the hearts of people upon the earth when the apostles preached the gospel to them. So we are not asking what faith. Paul exhorted the Phillippians to strive for "the faith of the gospel." But we are asking, "What kind of faith?" Because the Bible talks about different degrees of faith. The Lord one time rebuked his disciples and said, "O ye of little faith." On another occasion he highly complimented a man and said he had not found so great faith in Israel. In the Roman letter Paul talks of some of the brethren that had weak faith. And then we can read about dead faith and living and active and obedient faith. James said, "You see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (James 2:24) In the last verse of that chapter he said, "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." In Gal. 5:6 Paul said, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision saaieth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love." So the kind of faith that God respects in the heart of a man is a living, active; working faith, faith that leads a man not only to believe that God is, but to believe what he teaches and to obey his commands. If your faith is not strong enough to lead you to do what God commands you to do, it is not strong enough for you to be saved by faith. That is the kind of faith that a man must exercise in order to appropriate the salvation that God's grace has provided.

Now that is why we read such passages as Matthew 7:21 where Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." And in Romans 6:17 Paul reminded the Romans how they became Christians when he said, "Thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of doctrine whereunto we were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth." In Hebrews 5:8-9 Paul talking about the Lord Jesus said, "Through he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." So the kind of faith that God respects, the kind of faith that a man must exercise in order to accept the salvation that God's grace provided for us, is a living, active and obedient faith. A faith that does not lead a man to obey the gospel is not saving faith. To refuse to obey the gospel is to reject the grace of God and the salvation that God's grace has provided. That is why the Bible teaches that we must believe on the Lord, we must repent of our sins, we must be baptized into Christ, we must live the Christian life as long as we live upon the earth. We do these things because of our faith in God and faith in his word, and in doing we accept salvation that God's grace has provided for us. "For by grace have ye been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory."

If you are not a Christian will you not think seriously about your salvation. If you are lost, you cannot say that it is God's fault; if you are lost you cannot say that his grace was not sufficient; if you are lost you cannot say that Jesus did not make sufficient sacrifice to provide salvation. You can only say, like the people who rejected the Lord and would not come to him that they might be saved, "I am responsible. I refused salvation that God's grace procured for me."

THE JUDGMENT

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on December 6, 1959 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P. M.

Today I shall talk to you about the judgment day, the day when all men of all ages shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. We know that the judgment is a reality. It is easy for one who does not like to think about the judgment day, one who does not like the idea of standing before God in judgment, to be careless in his thinking on this subject. Some find it easy to make themselves believe that there will be no judgment day. But the Bible teaches that there will be a great judgment day when men of all ages, of every tongue and tribe shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. I want today to refresh your minds of some of the things that the Bible teaches concerning the judgment.

The judgment will be universal. Paul said to the Romans, "But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of God." (Rom. 14:10.) And in Acts 17:30 Paul said, "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained." The Lord Jesus said, "But when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations." And in Rev. 20:13 we read, "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." So this means that Cain and Abel and Adam and Eve, and all the people that lived before the flood, and those who perished in the flood, Methuselah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Pharaoh, and those who crucified our Lord, Peter and Paul, Caesar and Napoleon and all of us, will some day stand before God in judgment. There will be no possible way for us to escape judgment. As we cannot escape from the presence of God now, we will not be able to escape the judgment in the last day. In the 139th Psalm beginning with the seventh verse, the psalmist said, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thou hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." There is no possible way for a man to hide from God. There will be no possible way for a man to miss the judgment. We can no more miss the judgment than Jonah could run away from God.

Not only will it be a universal judgment, but each individual will be judged. It is a fearful thing to contemplate the judgment knowing that all of us will be there; but it is even more fearful when we realize that each man will be judged. I will not be judged in a group, and you will not be judged as a congregation, but each one of us must answer to the Lord. In Rom. 14:12 Paul said, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." In II Cor. 5:10 the apostle said, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body." In the parable of the talents, the master gave to one man five talents and to another two and to another one. And while he was gone the man with five talents made five more; the man with two made two more; the man with one talent digged a hole and hid it, kept it safely and gave it back to the master when he returned. He did not misuse it; he simply did not use it, and the master declared him to be lazy and wicked. Now had the master judged

them collectively he would have been blessed as the others. He might have said, "I gave you five, two and one--that is eight talents. While I was gone you almost doubled my money and made seven talents." But he did not say that; he took each man separately and said, "What did you do?" and "What did you do?" and "What did you do?" And that is the way that it is going to be in the judgment. All men of all lands, of all tongues, of all tribes will stand before God in the judgment and each man will be judged according to his deeds.

The Bible also teaches that we will be judged by the word of God. In Romans 2:2 Paul said, "We know that the judgment of God is according to the truth." In Romans 2:16 Paul tells us that "God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel." In John 12:48 the Lord Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." In Rev. 20:12, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened which was the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." So we will not be judged by the opinion we have of ourselves. If that were true I suppose all of us would likely go to heaven. We will not be judged by what our enemies might think of us. We will not be judged by the creeds that men have written. And you know, that is one of the strangest things that men will accept human creeds and attempt to serve God by these creeds, when they know all the time that they are not going to be judged by them in the judgment day. But the Bible teaches that we will be judged by the word of God. It is by God's word that we should live, for by God's word we will be judged in the judgment day.

The Bible also teaches that we will be judged by our works. I know there are some people who would minimize the importance of works. Sometimes they go so far as to tell us that works have practically nothing to do with a man's salvation. But the Bible does not talk that way. In Rev. 20:12 we read, "The dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." They were judged every man according to their works. In Rev. 2:23, "I will give unto each one of you according to your works." That was the Lord's statement in his letter to the church in Thyatira. "I will give unto each one of you according to your works." In Matt. 16:27 Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds." In Ii Cor. 5:10 Paul tells us, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." You remember also that Jesus tells us in John 5:28, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." So we will be judged by our works.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that we will be judged by our thoughts. You remember Solomon said, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." And the Lord Jesus said, "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings, these are the things that defile the man." In Acts 8 we read the story of Simon the sorcerer. Phillip was preaching in Samaria and the people believed the gospel and were baptized. and Simon the sorcerer, who had amazed the people with his sorcery also believed and was baptized. Some time later Peter and John came down from Jerusalem that they might impart gifts of the Spirit that the work may be carried on in the absence of the apostles or inspired men, and in the absence of the New Testament which had not been written at that time. And so by the laying on of the apostles' hands the Spirit was imparted. When Simon saw this he offered the apostles money and said, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit." And no doubt

he would have paid well for that privilege. But Peter said, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee."

The Bible also teaches that we will be judged by our words. In Matt. 12:37, Jesus said, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." In Matt. 23:36 the Lord said, "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Did you ever stop for a moment and consider the power of a man's words for good or bad? Words carelessly spoken have oftentimes wounded the heart of another as fatally as if an arrow had pierced their heart. Men's characters have been destroyed by a few careless open words of another. Homes have been broken up; communities have been disturbed; feuds have been fought between families over a period of years and men have suffered heartaches and disappointments, and nations have fought wars all because of the careless words of someone. And then again you can think about the good things, the happiness and the cheer and the sunshine that people scatter along life's pathway with good words. No wonder the Lord will judge us by our words.

Furthermore, as strange as it may seem, the Bible teaches that we will be judged by what we fail to do. James says, "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) Consider the one talent man again. He did not misuse his talent; he did not steal it; he did not throw it away; he simply did not use it at all. And because he failed to do what he should have done, the master condemned him. You are familiar with the story of the good Samaritan. When the poor fellow was left half dead on the side of the Jericho road and the Levite and the priest came by and passed him up, they did not take what the robbers left; they did not finish him off after the robbers had left him half dead. They simply passed him up and left him alone. They failed to do what they should have done. But the good Samaritan did simply what he should have done. In the picture that the Lord gives us of the judgment, the Lord said to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world." Well why? "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in." To those on the left he said, "Depart from me." Why? Not because of something they had done, but because of what they had left undone. "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink." So the Bible teaches that we will not only be judged by what we do, but we will be judged by what we fail to do.

The Bible also teaches that we will be judged according to our opportunities in this life. In Matt. 11:21 Jesus talking about some of the cities that refused to hear him while he was on the earth said, "Woe unto thee, Corazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.... It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you." Again in Matt; 10:14, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house of that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." Now these were the cities and the homes that refused to receive the disciples of the Lord during his personal ministry. And he said that it would be more tolerable for those wicked people in Sodom and Gomorrah, who were burned up and destroyed in the days of Abraham and Lot, than it will be for these cities that refused to hear and receive the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Well why? Because these cities had opportunities that Sodom and Gomorrah did not have. And Corazin and Bethsaida had opportunities to see and to hear and to believe the Lord Jesus, while Tyre and Sidon did not have such opportunities as they had.

Someone has well said that a man's responsibility equals his opportunity plus his ability. Or we may put it this way: a man's opportunity plus his ability equals his responsibility. Sometimes people, when they hear the truth free from the doctrines of men, hesitate to accept the truth; they hesitate to leave the faith that was believed or accepted and practiced by their fathers. But if their fathers and their grandfathers had had their opportunities and had heard the truth preached in its purity and its simplicity, the possibility is that they would have accepted it. In other words, the Lord is teaching us that it will be more tolerable for the people who are living in dark Africa and have not had the opportunities that we have in Nashville, Tennessee to hear the gospel, to have Bibles in our homes and churches all about us. We have been brought up by Christian parents; we have been taught about God and the Lord Jesus all of our lifetime, and how little we do considering our privileges and opportunities.

Finally, the judgment will be final. There will be no appeal and there will be no miscarriage of justice. Quite often today innocent people are condemned and the guilty go free. But it will not be that way in the judgment day. Also, we will be judged according to what we do in the flesh, not according to what happens after we leave the flesh. Then we will go away into eternal life or into eternal death. The reward of the righteous will be eternal life. Paul tells us in Romans 2:6 that God "will render to every man according to his works: to them that are patient in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are fractious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil." So the reward of the righteous will be eternal life; the reward of the wicked will be eternal death. In Rev. 20:14 we read, "And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire!" It is a fearful thing to contemplate the judgment, but it is necessary that we do, because we are going to meet God in the judgment and we are going to be judged by how we serve him in this life.

HEAVEN

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on November 30, 1958 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, and heard over radio station W L A C at 8:05 P. M.

In Hebrews 11:10 we read that Abraham "looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And Paul said in Hebrews 13:14, "For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after that city which is to come." The Bible reveals two eternal destinies for the human race - heaven and hell. Today we want to talk to you about heaven.

Paul said in Col. 3: 1, 2, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth." You remember Israel started from Egypt 600,000 strong above twenty years of age, but Israel fell in the wilderness and only Caleb and Joshua of that number entered the promised land. They could not forget the cucumbers and flesh pots of Egypt. Perhaps had they set their mind on the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey, they might have found it easier to overcome the difficulties and trials found in the wilderness and crossed Jordan into the promised land. Too many Christians today think only of earthly things. And we do not, as the apostle exhorted, set our affections on things above as much as we ought to. Nevertheless we like to sing about heaven and talk about heaven. But I am quite sure we do not preach about heaven as we should; we do not think about heaven as much as we ought to.

The Third Heaven

Paul in 2 Cor. 12: 1, 4, talked about the third heaven. He said, "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth,) such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man, (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter." Now we know there is but one eternal home of the redeemed. How can there be three heavens?

The Lord Jesus talked about the "birds of the heaven". So, doubtless there is one heaven that Paul was talking about. In Gen. 1:8 we read that "God called the firmament heaven". So up with the sun, moon, and stars is another heaven. This we still call the firmament. But Paul talked about Paradise. This is the eternal home of the redeemed. This is the home or the heaven, that we are interested in and the one we think about most and the one that we talk about, the one we intend to enjoy "in the sweet by and by".

It is well that we note the distinction as Paul makes it here, because it helps us to understand better some passages that might otherwise be difficult for us. For instance, on one occasion Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away". But Jesus was talking about Paradise when he said "heaven...shall pass away", he was not talking about the eternal home of the redeemed; he was talking about the firmament, the things that pertain to this universe. And when the apostle Peter talked about the heavens being on fire and melting with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3: 10, 13), he was not talking about Paradise. But he was talking about the firmament and all that pertains to this universe.

The Lord Promised Heaven

One of the last promises the Lord made to his disciples was heaven. On the night that he was betrayed, after he had eaten the passover feast with his disciples, and given them the Lord's supper, he made a farewell address to them before going out to Gethsemane where he was betrayed. This is found in John 14, 15, 16. He began by saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Heaven is a place and Lord Jesus is preparing that place for us now. When he comes again he will come to receive us and take us to that place that we call heaven. I know sometimes people would have us believe that heaven is going to be here on this earth, that the Lord will renovate this old world with fire and then place us back here. But the Bible does not teach that. The Bible teaches that Jesus is preparing heaven for us now, that Jesus will return and take us to that place that he has gone to prepare for us.

Heaven Is A Beautiful Place

It is beyond the power of man to properly describe heaven. I suppose there are no words that we might use, that we understand, that would properly describe heaven for us. We perhaps can say, after we see the beauties of heaven, as did the queen of the South, after she had seen the riches of Solomon, "The half was not told me". You remember the apostle Paul, when talking about the blessings of the new covenant compared to the old, said, "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9.) And so it is with us. It has not entered into the heart of man, and eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard anything compared to the glory and beauty of heaven. I know the Bible talks about the city of pure gold with walls of Jasper, gates of pearl, streets of gold, (Rev. 21), but doubtless the Lord used these words to describe heaven because we can understand them. I sometimes try to preach a sermon on the surprises that people will experience on the Judgment day. And I am quite sure that the humble child of God who is welcomed into the joys of the Lord, will be the one who will experience the greatest surprise, because heaven will be so much more wonderful than anything we have ever thought about or dreamed about in this life. Heaven is a beautiful place, a wonderful place.

Heaven Is Eternal

Furthermore, heaven is eternal. The glories of old Babylon long ago faded away. Rome flourished for a while and passed away, and other great empires have come upon the scene for a while and they too passed away. Regardless of the beauty and grandeur of the things of this life and world, they will not last. They shall all pass away. But heaven, heaven will never pass away. And that is why the Lord Jesus said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." And the apostle Peter talked about our inheritance in heaven as being undefiled and that fadeth not away.

In this world we build beautiful homes; we amass great fortunes; we establish great business firms; we build great bridges across the lakes and rivers of our land; the high ways of our country run like bands of ribbon over the hills

and vales of our beautiful land, and our parks remind us of the Garden of Eden. But all of these things will pass away. But heaven, heaven will never pass away. And after we have been there ten thousand times ten thousand years, we will be no nearer to the end than we were the first day we entered therein. Heaven is eternal.

Only The Pure And Holy Will Be In Heaven

Only the pure, the holy, the good will be in heaven. We think of a community as being a good community or a bad community according to the character of the people who make up the community. If the people are good, we say it is a good community; if they are wicked people, we say it is a bad community. But heaven will be inhabited only with the good, the pure, the holy. In Rev. 21:8 we read, "the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators and sorcerers and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And again, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have a right to come to the three of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. Without are dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." Only the good, the pure and the holy will inhabit heaven.

Someone has said that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. And this of course is true. I have often thought, what would happen to some people if they should get to heaven. They do not find any pleasure associating with good people on the earth; they seem to be embarrassed or uneasy when in the presence of Christians even for a few minutes. And should it be their lot to enter into heaven, how could they be happy? For there they would be in the presence of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy angels and the redeemed of the earth. There they would be only with the good, the pure and holy. Would they be happy? Truly heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

We Shall See Jesus Face To Face

We like to think that in heaven there will be Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah and Isaiah, Daniel and Ezekiel, John the Baptist and the apostles, Mary and Martha, Paul and Barnabas, Peter, James and John, and all the great characters we read about in the Bible. And I sometimes wonder if it will be our privilege to talk with them, see them and know them. I do not know whether we will be able to talk with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob or not, but I do know that we shall meet our Lord face to face, see him and be like him. John tells us, "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (I John 3:2.) We sing a beautiful song sometimes about being face to face with Jesus.

Face to Face with Christ my Savior,
Face to Face - what will it be,
When with rapture I behold him,
Jesus Christ who died for me?

Will We Know Each Other in Heaven?

Sometimes the question is asked; "Will we know each other in heaven?" Some say yes, and some say no. Nevertheless, we will be happy in heaven whether we know each other or not. It seems reasonable to us that we should know each other in heaven, and there are some scriptures that seem to teach that we will

know each other there. For example, Moses and Elijah were recognized on the mount of Transfiguration. When Abraham died, the Bible said that he was gathered unto his people. That, of course, did not have reference to the cave of Machpelah where he was buried, because his people were not buried there. But in some sense Abraham went to be with his fathers. When David's little boy died, you remember David said, "I cannot bring him back, but I can go to him." And in some sense David understood that he could go and be with his little boy who had died. In I Thess. 2: 19, Paul said, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming?" In some sense Paul was saying, "I shall present you to the Lord as the fruit of my labors at his coming." Such scriptures as these make us believe at least to some degree that we shall know each other in heaven. But whether we do or not, we will be happy. We should understand that the family relationships that we have and enjoy in this life, are for our happiness here upon the earth, and these relationships will not be necessary for us to be happy in heaven.

No Pain, No Sorrow, No Death in Heaven

In heaven, there will be no pain, no sickness, no sorrow, no good-byes, no death. The world is filled with suffering. Every home must share its part of sorrow. We need only to visit the hospitals, the homes of the poor, the neglected, to realize how much suffering and sorrow and pain is in the world. Our fondest hopes and dreams are often blighted at the very moment we expect to realize them. There is a vacant chair in almost every home. If there is not one in your home now, there will be soon; because death and decay is written upon every living thing. But in heaven there will be no sickness, no sorrow, no pain, no good-byes, and no death.

I like to think of heaven as somewhat like a beautiful spring morning when there is not a storm cloud in the sky, when the songs of the birds fill the air and the fragrant flowers sway in the soft breezes and the soul almost bursts with joy. Heaven indeed, is a beautiful place, a wonderful place. Sometimes as we talk about heaven and read about heaven and think about heaven, the thought enters our mind, "Is it real; is it real or is it just a fairy tale?" No, it is not a fairy tale; it is real! Heaven is real! No wonder the apostle Paul said, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth." No wonder he wants us to think and talk about heaven, because if we set our minds on things before us it will make it easier for us to overcome the trials and hardships and temptations we meet in this life. And as we compare the glories of heaven with our trials and hardships here, it will help to make them fade into nothing compared to the joys of over there. How foolish it will seem to us then, if we miss heaven because we exchanged the joys of heaven for the pleasures of the world.

No Sacrifice Is Too Great For Heaven

There is no sacrifice too great in order for a man to enjoy heaven. That is what Jesus was talking about when he said, "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out;... If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off." It is better, if necessary, to sacrifice the dearest thing on earth to us, than to hold on to it and miss heaven.

THE LORD'S DAY

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee on August 28, 1960 and heard over radio station WLAC at 8:05 P.M.

I am reading from the first chapter of the Revelation of John beginning with the 9th verse, "I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice which spake with me." When John wrote this statement he was on the isle of Patmos, exiled there by the government because he was preaching the gospel of Christ. He speaks of being in the Spirit on the Lord's day. The day referred to by the apostle doubtless has reference to the first day of the week. By the close of the first century, the early writers styled the first day of the week the Lord's day. It is wonderful that this large auditorium is filled three times on Lord's day. Because you love the Lord you also love the Lord's day. You love the services of the Lord and you come to worship God.

This day, the first day of the week which we call the Lord's day, has been marked by great events in the Bible. First of all, it was the day that our Lord came forth from the grave, and on this day he often appeared to his disciples during the period of forty days between his resurrection and his ascension. Some think that he ascended on the Lord's day. We know that Pentecost fell on the first day of the week and therefore on the Lord's day. And so all the events of that day took place on the Lord's day. (Acts 2.) It was on this day that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and went forth to preach the gospel of Christ guided by the Holy Spirit. It was on this day, therefore, that they first preached salvation in the name of the crucified Lord, on this day that the first sermon was preached under the great commission that Jesus had given to his apostles. On this day for the first time the terms of salvation as laid down in the gospel were announced to lost men. On this day for the first time people were commanded to be baptized in the name of a crucified Lord. On this day for the first time people were baptized for the remission of their sins in the name of Jesus. It, of course, was the birthday of the church, and here was the introduction of the New Covenant. People were for the first time added by the Lord to the church on the Lord's day. (Acts 2:47.) And after we leave the second chapter of Acts we find that the Christians met for worship on the Lord's day. In the 20th chapter of Acts and the seventh verse, Luke said, "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight." In I Cor. 16:1-2 Paul said, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order unto the churches of Galatia, also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come." This is the only day we read of in the New Testament when Christians assembled to worship God.

The Lord's day should not be confused with the sabbath day. The sabbath day belonged to the law of Moses and the sabbath day fell on the seventh day of the week, not on the first day of the week. God gave the law of Moses to Israel only. In Deut. 5:2-3 we read where Moses said, "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." God did not make that covenant with

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and others that lived before that day. But he made it with Israel, the people to whom Moses was speaking at that time. Immediately following this statement from Moses he named the ten commandments, of which the sabbath was one. The old covenant made at Sinai, between God and Israel, included the ten commandments. In Ex. 34:28 we read, "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." But this covenant which Paul calls the old covenant, is not binding upon Christians; the sabbath was given to Israel as part of the law at Sinai and is not binding upon Christians. In Hebrews 8:7 we find Paul quoting from Jeremiah 31:31 concerning the change of the covenant. He said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt." And then he concluded that chapter saying, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." Now the covenant that God made with Israel when he took them by the hand and led them forth out of the land of Egypt was the covenant which he made at Sinai, which included the ten commandments of which the sabbath was one. In Col. 2:14-16 Paul said, "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to the feast day or a new moon, or a sabbath day; which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's." Now the things mentioned by the apostles such "as judge you in meat or drink or feast days, new moon or a sabbath day" all had reference to ordinances and laws under the law of Moses. Paul said these things have been removed and the Lord nailed them to the cross, so let no man judge you concerning these things anymore.

The sabbath was not changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week, but it was abolished when the law was taken out of the way along with the Passover and the covenant of circumcision and other laws and ordinances found in the law of Moses. Remember, the sabbath was given to Israel and to Israel only, and the Lord required Israel to keep the sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In Deut. 5:15 Moses said, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore Jehovah thy God commandeth thee to keep the sabbath day." So, if we should keep the sabbath day, as did Israel, we could not keep it for the same purpose, for the Lord intended that they should observe the sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. But the Lord has not delivered Christians from Egyptian bondage, therefore we could not keep the sabbath for the same purpose.

We are, of course, aware of the fact that Constantine the Emperor in 321 A. D. declared the first day of the week the Lord's day, a holiday. In those days there were many slaves. There were perhaps as many slaves in the Roman Empire as there were free men. And many of these slaves were Christians. And before Constantine, who favored Christianity as a religion, declared the first day of the week a holiday it was difficult for many of these slaves to find an opportunity to worship God on the Lord's day. And therefore, he favored the Christians in declaring the first day of the week a holiday. And it has been considered a holiday in all nations since then where Christianity has had its influence among the people. It is sometimes said that Constantine changed the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week, but this is not true. Constantine simply declared the first day of the week a holiday. Christians for at least 300 years had been observing the Lord's day and they had been assembling at various places to worship God on the Lord's day, even though they sometimes found it difficult because it was not then a holiday.

The Lord's day is not called the Christian sabbath in the Bible. It is not to be observed by Christians as the sabbath was observed by people who lived under the law of Moses. It is to the Christians particularly a day of worship, as we have assembled today to worship God. It is indeed the Lord's day. You remember Malachi raises the question, "Will a man rob God?" Men of today rob God of his day. I remember Brother Calhoun putting the matter like this; He said, "Should a man see me lay my watch down and when I am not looking, without my knowledge and without my consent, take my watch and walk away with it, he has stolen my watch and he is a thief. But should a man stop me on the street with a gun in his hand and say, 'Be still, or I will shoot you,' and then with my knowledge and without my consent, appropriate my watch, he is a robber and he has robbed me." Now a man cannot steal from God because God knows what we are doing all the time. But a man can rob God, that is, he may take that which belongs to God without God's consent but with God's knowledge. And when people today appropriate the Lord's day as their day, they have robbed God of his day. You remember the passage that Jesus gave with reference to the Roman coin, "Render unto God the things that are God's and unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." So let us give to God that which belongs to God. Perhaps you have heard the story about the little boys who were walking along the country road one day, passed a farmer's house and nearby saw seven luscious ripe pears on the tree. And as they were looking at the pears, and perhaps thinking what they might do, the farmer came along and pulled off six pears and gave them to the little boys; he left one for himself. The boys went on down the road, ate the pears and then after a while, when the farmer was not looking, slipped back and took the seventh pear. Well, the Lord is good to us and he has given us so much and yet we are not satisfied with all that the Lord has bestowed upon us. We want to take what is his also.

Well, what should we do upon the Lord's day? First of all, Christians should worship God on the Lord's day. Upon the first day of the week they came together to worship God. Often we excuse ourselves for our negligence in Christian duties on the grounds that we just do not have time to do this and to do that. People say, "I just never have time to read by Bible as I ought to." Well, of course, that is not true. We each have the same amount of time every day, and the Lord does not tell us what to do with each minute or each hour of every day. He leaves that with us and it depends upon what we want to do. And if we really want to read the Bible we will find time every day. That is what we ought to do, read God's word, feast our souls upon God's word. No man can grow spiritually as he should who neglects to read the Bible. God's word is food for the soul. When we neglect to eat our physical bodies suffer; and when we neglect to read and feast our souls upon God's word, we suffer spiritually. The Lord's day is a wonderful day for us to read God's word.

It is a good time also, for us to study our Bible lessons. So often people come to our Bible classes on Sunday mornings and at other times when we assemble to study God's word and have not studied the lesson. They knew what the lesson would be a week ago, nevertheless, they have not studied the lesson. Why? Well, they say, "I just did not have time." The Lord's day would be a wonderful day for us to study our Bible lessons for the coming Lord's day. It is a wonderful day for us to visit those who are shut-in, and old people who cannot get out and around as much as they would like to, and who have been shut off from the world and would delight in contacting people who are busy and active. It is a good day to visit the sick and those who need comfort from us. It is a good day for us to rest and to meditate. All of us find a time during the week when we can separate ourselves from the rest of the world and in some quiet place meditate upon the things of the day and take inventory of ourselves. It will help us to be better and stronger people in the Lord.

It is so unfortunate that even many who profess to be Christians use the Lord's day as an occasion for recreation, to go fishing or for boat races and the like. Now such events may not be wrong within themselves, but why do we take the Lord's day for these things? The Lord has given us a full week, why not take one of these days? When we want to set aside a special day like Mother's Day, why do we select the Lord's day? That day belongs to the Lord, and nothing should be done to attract our attention from the Lord on the Lord's day. The respect that we show to the Lord's day indicates the respect that we show for the Lord himself. And when we as fathers and mothers show little respect for the Lord's day, use it as a day for everything in the world, for business and recreation and most anything else, how will our children think about the Lord's day. Will it mean anything to them? Will they respect it as a day when Christians come together to worship God, and when they do, become restless and anxious for the hour to pass so they can get out and begin to attend to worldly things that really do not belong to the Lord's day? May the good Lord help us to think seriously about these things and help us to love the Lord's day even as we love the Lord.

WORSHIP

A sermon delivered by J. Roy Vaughan on November 2, 1958 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee and heard over radio station W L A C.

"The woman said unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

I have read a part of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman as recorded in the fourth chapter of the gospel according to John. In our wonderful country today and in other nations throughout the world, millions of people go to church on Sunday. Some for social advantages, some for political reasons, some to be with friends, some to please husband or wife, some to worship God. I could wish that people would no longer talk about going to church and talk more about going to worship, for when one says, "I am going to church," I do not always know what he is going to do; but when one says, "I am going to worship," I have a pretty good idea of what he is going to do. People go to church for so many reasons. But we have assembled this morning in this appointed place in the presence of God to worship God.

It is natural for man to worship God. Men of every age and tribe and tongue have been found to be worshippers. In this man is unlike the mere animals, The animal does not worship, but man is a worshipper. But he does not always worship the true and living God. Sometimes man worships a god of his own creation, an idol carved from stone or a molten image. Sometimes he worships an animal or the sun or the stars or the moon. But nevertheless, man has always been found to be a worshipper. There are many people in the world today who still worship idols. But these people do not worship idols because they despise Almighty God, it is not because they do not want to worship the only true and living God; it is because they do not know God as we know God. You know Paul said of the Galatians, in the fourth chapter of his letter to the churches of Galatia, "Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods," (Gal. 4:8-9.) But when they came to know God, they no longer worshipped these idols but the true and living God. And this ought to make us think more seriously and perhaps work harder to carry the gospel of the Lord Jesus into every corner of the world, that all men everywhere might know the true and living God and worship God as we worship God.

Worship is something that takes place in the heart. The heart is thrilled; the emotion is stirred. It is an expression of adoration and praise and honor. It is somewhat like the spontaneous applause or the roar of the grandstand when some outstanding play is made in the game, or the cheer of the people as the president passes by, or soldiers on parade. Sometimes the people stand with bowed heads in solemn silence, others shout, while others sing or whistle. This is not a mere mechanical act, but the natural outburst of praise from the heart. And so it is when we come to worship God. Our knowledge of God, his great mercy, his wonderful love, his power, his abundant blessings showered upon us, when properly remembered, thrills the heart, and in worship the child of God is attempting to express his gratitude and

praise to a great and benevolent God. Worship, therefore, is something that comes from the heart; it is not performing mere mechanical acts.

Almighty God is the object of Christians' worship. You remember the Lord Jesus said, when answering the devil who tempted him, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10.) When Peter came to the household of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, but Peter said, "Stand up, I myself also am a man," (Acts 10:25,26.) And you remember John tells us, "I fell down to worship before the angel...and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellowservant...worship God." (Rev. 22:8,9.) God said to Israel when he gave the ten commandments, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, the earth beneath, or that is in waters under the earth." (Ex. 20:4.) So man is not to worship another man regardless of how high he may be exalted by his fellowman. He is not to worship an idol made by his own hands; he is not to worship an angel; but he is to worship the Lord and "him only shalt thou serve."

Men have worshipped God in various ways in different ages. In Genesis 4 we read that Cain and Abel in process of time brought an offering unto the Lord. The first thing, or about the first thing that Noah did when he came out of the ark, was to build an altar and make an offering unto the Lord. You remember when the Lord told Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah and offer him in sacrifice to the Lord, and after they had come to the place, Abraham said to the servant, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship." (Gen. 22:5.) When the wise men came to the babe in Bethlehem the record says, "They fell down and worshipped him." And under the law of Moses, Israel kept the tabernacle services and made their sacrifices unto the Lord. In all of these instances, man was attempting to worship God.

Now when we come to the Christian dispensation, we find that God has also required certain definite acts of worship for the Christian to perform as he comes to worship God. The Lord Jesus, fortunately for us, has defined true worship or acceptable worship. I read to you a moment ago from the fourth chapter of John where Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman. She wanted to know, "Shall we worship here in the mountain where my fathers worshipped, or go down to Jerusalem where you Jews have a temple." And the Lord said, "The hour cometh, when we shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father...God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:20,24.) To worship God in spirit, suggests the attitude of a man's heart. We must come with sincere, earnest hearts and what we do must come from the heart. We must come with a submissive, forgiving, contrite heart. What we do in worship to God must be done sincerely and from the heart if we would worship God in spirit. To worship God in truth is to worship God as the truth authorizes us. You remember in John 17:17, Jesus said, "Sanctify them in truth: thy word is truth." And in 2 John 9 he said, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." And Paul said in Colossians 3:17, "Whatsoever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. So, when we come to worship God we must worship as God has authorized us in his word; we must do what God teaches us to do, and then we must do that sincerely and earnestly from the heart. Now that is the Lord's definition of true worship. We are not left to devise a program that appeals to us. When we come to worship God we are to please God, not entertain the audience that might be assembled.

When we want to please a man we need to know something about that man's likes and dislikes. Some men like one thing and other men like something else. One man would be pleased should you give him a bottle of whiskey as a gift; another would be insulted. And so it is in worshipping God. Man needs to know what pleases

Worship

God, lest his worship, though it be sincerely offered is an abomination to the Lord and displeasing unto God. And so the Lord has taught us what to do when we come to worship him. In the New Testament we find the apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, taught the early church to pray (Acts 2:42) to eat the Lord's supper in memory of the Lord Jesus, (I Cor. 11:23,) to give as they had been prospered (I Cor. 16:2), to sing and to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord (Eph. 5:19), and to edify one another in the word (Acts 2:42). Now we would not know that it is right and acceptable for us to pray if the Lord had not taught us to pray. We would not know that it is right for us to eat the Lord's supper and pleasing to the Lord, if the Lord had not taught us to do this. So we know to do these items of worship laid down in the New Testament is acceptable unto the Lord. But it is not possible for any man on all the face of the earth today to say that anything more or less is pleasing unto the Lord. Now you may say, "I think this is all right; I think that is all right," and no doubt you are sincere in saying that, but you do not know that it is pleasing and acceptable unto the Lord. We are not to worship and serve God according to what we think; we are to worship and serve God according to his word. ~~This is why the churches of Christ throughout the land do not use instrumental music in Christian worship; this is why they do not burn incense and do many other things that you sometimes find in worship. These things are not authorized in God's word. The Lord said if you would worship him acceptable you must worship him in spirit and in truth, for such doth God seek to be his worshippers. To worship God in spirit then, is to worship him with our spirit, sincerely, earnestly from the heart, and what we do must be authorized by God's word.~~

→ Now fortunately, on the other hand, the Lord has taught us what vain worship is. It is somewhat like a man putting up a sign at the cross roads and saying, "This road goes to such and such a place," and another sign saying, "This road does not go to that place." While on one hand the Lord has defined true worship; on the other hand he has defined vain worship. In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus said, "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." Understand these people were worshipping God; they were not worshipping idols. But nevertheless the Lord said, "In vain do they worship me." To worship God in vain, of course, is to worship him in a way that is not acceptable to God; it is useless and worthless; it is an empty service. They perhaps worshipped God with their hearts, but they did not do what God authorized them to do. They did according to the doctrines of men. And the Lord said when we worship him that way our worship is vain.

After all, we understand that God knows best in all things; and God knows what is best for us when we come to express our gratitude and praise to God. And we know that to do the things laid down in the New Testament, to worship God as the early church worshipped God, is acceptable unto the Lord. They are suited to our spiritual needs; they help us to build Christian character; they edify the soul; they strengthen our faith; and best of all they please and honor God. And that is what we want to do when we come to worship God.
