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— BY —

JOHN RITCHIE



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## PREFACE

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THE papers which compose this unpretentious little Volume have appeared in Booklets, and been widely circulated in this form among Young Believers for many years.

Some who have personally derived benefit from them, and who desire a book containing plain and practical teachings on the early steps of Christian life to put into the hands of young converts and others seeking the ways of the Lord, have requested that these might be collected and issued in the present form. This has now been done, with the desire that the Lord may make use of the little Volume to guide the feet of many of the lambs of the blood-bought flock into the plain paths of His Holy Word, in which all who seek to humbly walk with Him find great blessing.

J. R.

KILMARNOCK,  
*September, 1909.*

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# The Word of God

## THE WORD OF GOD.

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**T**IME was, when the Word of God in its solitary dignity was the believer's guide in everything. It answered all his questions, enlightened all his path, and guided him in fulfilling all his relationships to God, his brethren, and the world. Creeds, catechisms, and confessions had no place in those happy days. The Word of God, the whole Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God, was the final appeal. A "thus saith the Lord" from the Book settled everything; nothing more was asked for, nothing less would have been received. God had spoken and His people heard the Word and rendered Him prompt obedience. They stood in "awe of His Word," and receiving it not as the word of men, but, as it is, the Word of God, it "wrought *effectually* in them that believed" (1 Thess. ii. 13). Subject to *one* Lord, guided by *one* Book, the saints were of "one accord, of one mind," and there were no divisions among them. Ere long the fine gold

became dim; men's words became popular, and by their traditions and teachings, they supplanted the Word of God. Gradually, as time wore on, creeds and confessions came to the front, and the Word of God went to the rear, till its voice was all but hushed in the dungeons of Rome.

Again there was a recovery, and, "The Book" was brought forth. Popish darkness fled before its light, and again the Gospel of God was proclaimed with more or less clearness, and is still heard and believed among men. We have "*The Book*" again in our hands, and in our mother tongue: The Book that contains the whole revelation of God, perfect and complete. Nothing can be added to it, nothing can be taken from it. What a treasure! Do you know, dear young believer, that in that precious book you call "*your own Bible*" God has stored up all the counsel, all the advice, and all the knowledge you need as His child while here below? Not only about salvation does it speak to you, but about *everything*. Yes; every step, from the day of your conversion, till your feet stand on Heaven's threshold, is *marked* out in the pages of the Word of God.

Keep a firm grip, then, of your Bible, and make it your constant companion, your counsellor, your "spiritual adviser," as well as the bread-basket for your soul, and your sword for the battle. Remember "Every word of God is



pure" (Prov. xxx. 6), and "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable*" (2 Tim. iii. 16). It is the devil that divides God's Word into two parts, calling the one "*essential*" and the other "*non-essential*," but the child of God who loves his Father's Word delights to say "I esteem *all* thy precepts concerning ALL THINGS to be right, and I hate *every* false way" (Ps. cxix. 128). That's it. Not only concerning salvation, but concerning *all things*. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Church fellowship, and the Coming of the Lord, just the same, for God has very fully and clearly given *His* will on all these things, and no man, or company of men have any right to give "their ideas" about them, any more than they have to "devise" another way of salvation.

Take the Word of God then, young believer, and the Word of God *alone* for your guide. *Enquire within for everything*. Bring all you *hear* and all you *read*, to the test of the Word of God, and if it will not stand the test, reject it, even if the one who wrote or spoke it is called a "divine" or a "learned man." That is what the Bereans did when they heard Paul preach. "They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so" (Acts xvii. 11), and he calls them "noble" for so doing. Bring all "to the law and to the testimony, and if they speak not *according to this Word* it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20). No matter how

hoary with age and honour the traditions of men may be, they cannot command the allegiance of God's child; he must say as did the Apostles—"We ought to obey God rather than men," even if like them he may have to suffer for it.

### The Word of God in Salvation.

A man and his wife were one night sitting reading the Word of God. Suddenly looking up somewhat amazed, he said "Wife, if this book be true we are *lost*!" and again resumed his reading. Before he had gone far, he again looked up and exclaimed, "Wife, if this book be true *we may be saved*!" and a third time, in a loud voice, "Wife, if this book be true, *I am saved*!" Just so; I never could have known I was *lost*, but by God's Word; my own heart would never have told me that. I never could have even thought that God would have so loved a sinner as to give His Son to die for him; I know it because God's Word has said it (Rom. v. 8). And who could ever have dared to say his soul was saved, his sins all forgiven, and Heaven his home, if God had not said so in His Word. But He *has*, and I believe it, simply because He has said it. Surely that's enough. The entrance of God's words giveth light (Ps. cxix. 130), and we are "Born again by the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever"

(1 Peter i. 23-25), no matter what men say. We don't ask their opinion; God has said it, and we believe Him. And it's just the same with everything else; it is not what Mr. So-and-so says, but what does God say? That alone must settle the question whatever it may be.

### The Word of God the Believer's Food.

The new-born babe requires its milk else it will decline and die; the working man requires his food else his arm will soon be powerless and his strength decayed. So it is with the Christian. The life he has received on being "born again" requires nourishment: first milk, then "strong meat" as he is able to bear it. And so we read—"As new-born babes, desire the sincere *milk of the Word* that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter ii. 2). Look at that helpless babe on his mother's breast. See how eagerly he sucks in the milk that feeds and makes him grow, aye, and screams if it be withheld. Learn here a lesson, young believer. *Desire* the sincere (that is, pure, unadulterated) milk of the Word of God in the same way. Drink in verse after verse of it for your soul's nourishment and growth. Seize every opportunity you can, to meditate and feed on the Word of God. Your soul cannot thrive without it, you cannot *grow* if you neglect your Bible. Many have found out this to their cost who have tried it, and

gone on for years buried in the world, and barren in their souls. Neglect of God's Word has been the cause of so little growth among many who are truly converted, and of backsliding and misery among others who for a while "ran well." All God's mighty men have been lovers of the Word.

*David* says—"O how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. cxix. 97). "I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoil" (Ps. cxix. 162).

*Job* says—"I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job xxiii. 12).

*Jeremiah* says—"Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. xv. 16). The blessed Lord Himself when here below was the Man whose delight was in the law of the Lord, and He meditated therein day and night (Ps. i. 3). He lived by "every word that proceeded from the mouth of God" (Mat. iv. 4).

Dear young believer,—Make it a habit daily to have your soul fed out of God's Word. Open your Bible while your heart breathes up to your Father in Heaven, "Give me this day my daily bread," and you will be abundantly satisfied; for there is "bread enough and to spare." You cannot live to-day upon what you got yesterday, but like as Israel gathered the manna *fresh* every morning so must you. They gathered it

early, and when the sun waxed hot it melted (Ex. xvi). Let your soul have the first attention. If you go out to your business, commence your daily work, or pore over the letters or newspaper, before you have got "manna" for your soul, it is not likely you will have much appetite for it after. Satan hates meditation on the Word of God and prayer, the twin sustainers of the believer's spiritual life, so he will try to cheat you out of them. *Watch!* Read the Word carefully and prayerfully. Give your soul the full range and scope of Holy Scripture, and not a few favourite passages. The Spirit "guides into *all* truth."

Read it with reference to yourself, for your own soul's need—your own walk and life. Say, "that is for me," and whatever it condemns about you renounce; whatever it commands, obey; for "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 28).

Perhaps you have little leisure time, but the Lord knows all about that. Every man gathered the manna according to his eating, and he that gathered little had no lack. Only watch that the flesh and the devil don't steal away your time.

Mary S—— was the kitchen-maid in a farmhouse. Up in the morning at five, often working till ten at night. You may ask "when had she time to read her Bible?" Ah! but "where there's a will there's a way;" and Mary had her

morning portion of manna, and was strong to bear the taunts and jeers of the ungodly during the day.

James R—— was an apprentice grocer. He got only half-an-hour to his meals, and worked from early morning till late at night. I saw James was “growing,” and asked his master’s wife how he got on in the house. “O,” she said, “he sits with his spoon in one hand and his Bible in the other.” That explained it. He was feeding on the Word of God, and growing thereby; as it is written—“I write unto you, young men, because ye are *strong*, and the Word of God abideth in you” (1 John ii. 14).

Beware of “light bread.” Religious books are sold in abundance, and read by many believers, most damaging to the soul. The “Evangelical Magazine” may contain the devil’s poison as well as “the yellow boarded novel,” only it may be better hid, and coated over with Scripture.

“Take heed what you hear” (Mark iv. 24). Much that goes by the name of the ministry of the Word of God is but well-spun theories and traditions of men; cunningly devised fables got up to please the people, and make the Word of God of none effect. Should I lend my ears to such preaching? Let God answer—“*Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge*” (Prov. xix. 27).

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent

not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness. . . . *from such withdraw thyself*" (1 Tim. vi. 3-5).

## The Word of God the Believer's Guide—in the Family, the Church, and the World.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). It gives light on every step of the way, and in every department of a Christian's life. There is no room for "I think" in the smallest matter, for God has given *His thoughts* in His Word, and happy is the child of God who can say with David—"How precious are *Thy thoughts* unto me, O God!" (Ps. cxxxix. 17).

*In the Family.* How to behave here, God has told us plainly. Husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, and servants are all shown their various responsibilities and privileges in the Word of God. A fruitful source of the disorders and troubles in many families is the neglect of these plain injunctions. Some seem to have no idea that God expects obedience in this, as well as all else, even down to the manner of his people's dress. See 1 Peter iii. 1-4; 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, for "*present fashions*" for a Christian woman, and Deut. vi. 5-7 for the place

the Word of God should have in daily life, in the social circle.\*

*In the Church.* Here the Word of God is very full and plain. The first Epistle to Timothy is written to shew him "how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15). And God has not repealed that epistle, nor the first Epistle to the Corinthians. They show *us* to-day "the form of the house and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof" (Ezek. xliii. 11). Although man has brought in *his* creeds and confessions upsetting and supplanting the order of the Church of God as given in the Word, let it be remembered that God has never changed His mind one whit; and what He wrote to the Church of Corinth and to Timothy eighteen hundred years ago *must* be *our* guide to-day. *Men's* churches may be guided by *men's* words; *men* may sit in council to frame laws and issue bulls at their

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\* *For instructions as to the place and responsibilities of*

Husbands—See Eph. v. 25-28; Col. iii. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 7.

Wives               " Eph. v. 22-23; Col. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 1-6;  
Tit. iv. 4-5.

Fathers             " Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21.

Children          " Eph. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 20.

Masters          " Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.

Servants          " Eph. vi. 5; Tit. ii. 9; Col. iii. 22; 1 Pet.  
ii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 1.



pleasure, legislating to build up the various sects they have attached themselves to, but the "Church of the living God" must be governed by the Word of the living God, and in subjection to her living Head, whose name and reproach she bears. If God's people would take their Bibles and compare the Churches of the present hour with what God declares in Scripture they ought to be, there would be somewhat of the humiliation among them that filled young King Josiah when the long lost *Book of the Law* was found, and things in the "religious world" were brought to the test of what was written therein. He rent his clothes, "Because," said he, "our fathers have not kept the *Word of the Lord* to do after *all* that is written in this book" (2 Chron. xxxiv. 18-21). And he did not stop there, but at once commenced to set things in order *according to the Book*. That's what we have got to do to-day. Confusion and disorder are around as everywhere in the professing Church, but *God and His Word* remain the same. We cannot *revive* the Church of the day of Pentecost "when all who believed were together;" but, like the handful of Jews who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, we can build amid the *ruin according to the Book*, and rally around the *name of the Lord Jesus*, with arms open to receive *all* whom He has received; and this is being done to-day. Bless His name. Search your Bible, young

believer, and see there what the Church of God is, its fellowship, order, rule, and discipline. You will there learn what worship is, and who are worshippers; what God has said on baptism as well as *who* are to be baptized, and *when*;\* what the Lord's Supper is, who are to partake, and how often.† All this is fully gone into *once for all* in God's Word, and left there for our obedience. Times and customs have changed, but God and His Word abide for ever.

*In the World.* Our path here too is mapped out for us clearly in the Book (see John xvii). Our duties to kings and governors (Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Peter ii. 13, 14), our walk among unconverted men (Col. iv. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 12), and even our

\* *Who are to be baptized?*—Believers only: see Matt. xxvii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.

*How?*—By immersion: see Acts viii. 38, 39. The Greek word "*Baptizo*" means "to dip," to plunge, to immerse, Acts xvi. 14, 15; xvi. 32-34.

*When?*—After believing: see Acts ii. 41; viii. 12; viii. 37.

*What does it Mean?*—It is a figure of death, burial, and resurrection with Christ: see Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12.

*What about Infant Baptism?*—Search the Word for it, and all the Scriptures that command it, and the cases you find where infants are said to have been baptized, insert here.      chap.      verse.

‡ *The Lord's Supper* was instituted by the Lord Jesus: see Matt. xxvi. 26, 29; Luke xxii. 19, 20. For believers only: see Acts ii. 42; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 16. Observed on the first day of the week, Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 25. To be continued till the Lord come, 1 Cor. xi. 26

behaviour towards our enemies (Rom. xii. 20), are all clearly shown there, so that we need neither be in darkness nor in doubt.

### Obedience to the Word of God.

"To *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* than the fat of rams" (2 Sam. xv. 23). "I have *no greater joy* than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4).

Nothing pleases God so much as obedience to His Word. And no amount of service can make up for wilfully shirking the plain commands of Scripture. Some seem to have forgotten this, and under the plea that it would "hinder their usefulness" and "fetter their zeal," they shuffle past, or allow to lie unheeded, some of God's plainest injunctions.

Would God ever put any man into a "sphere of usefulness" where he could not, dare not, obey His Word? *Never!* Neither would He send His servants into a circle where what they are to preach and what they must not mention is prescribed by men; for has He not declared in the Book, "He that hath *My Word*, let him speak *My Word* faithfully (Jer. xxiii. 28)? A "door of utterance" that will not admit "the whole counsel of God" cannot be of His opening, and the servant who consents to be silent on certain subjects, because they would give *offence*, and upset the traditions of the men he

panders to, will have to answer to His Master for it at the judgment-seat; and there the word of approval shall not be, "Well done, successful servant, you have spoken to great crowds," but "Well done, good and *faithful* servant, thou hast been *faithful* over a *few things*" (Matt. xxv. 23).

In seeking to obey the Word of God, you will find many to hinder you, and your own friends and relations may be the worst of your opposers. If it were a question between *your own* will and that of your parents, then you must obey them, but if it be the will of God and your parents' will that are at variance, you *must* obey God rather than your parents. In doing this some have had to suffer, and even to leave the home of their childhood for *Christ's sake*. But surely this is not too much to do for Him if He call you to it. And Jesus says, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 37). Solemn, searching words!

M——, after she was a few weeks converted, had been reading the Word of God, and came upon Mark xvi. 15; Acts ii. 41; viii. 35-38. She saw it was her privilege to do likewise, and decided there and then to follow the Lord and be baptized. Her parents objected, and would not hear of it. She sought to show them from *the Book* it was God's will she wished to do, but it only increased their fury. She told them she

would rather do anything than disobey them, but she *must* obey God, let the consequences be what they might. *She followed the Lord*, and suffered for it, but He was with her in the trial, and soon redeemed His promise, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. iii. 30). Her parents, three sisters, and a brother are *all* converted now, and she has had the joy of seeing those who persecuted her follow in her steps. Hallelujah!

You will find religious professors among your greatest enemies if you follow the Lord fully, for many there are who call Jesus "Lord" but do not the things which He says. But what saith the Scriptures? "If any man love Me he will keep *My words*, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

# The Unequal Yoke

# THE UNEQUAL YOKE.

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“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

—(2 COR. VI. 14.)

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”—

(AMOS III. 3.)

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ALL the young believers who are here with us to-night take their Bibles and reverently search with me therein, that we may learn what the Lord says to us about “The Unequal Yoke,” in some of its practical bearings on matters of daily life and walk. I daresay you are all so happy in the Lord just now that your minds recoil from mingling with the giddy crowd, or forming alliance with the ungodly world. May the Lord preserve you in the simplicity of Christ, and in the dew of your youth. If your souls are satisfied with the Lord, and finding their delight in fellowship with Him, and in subjection to His blessed word, there will be no

desire for the companionship of the ungodly. Nevertheless, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed," and to have the truth of God dwelling richly within you, is your only safeguard in the day of trial. Like some stately vessel newly launched, you are sailing along beneath a cloudless heaven, but by-and-by the storms of temptation may gather around your souls, and it will fare badly with you then if they are not well "ballasted" by the truth of God. "Thy *word* have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm cxix, 11); and "By the *words* of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Psalm xvii. 4).

I have observed during the last few years that one of Satan's masterpiece devices for the crippling of young believers has been "The Unequal Yoke." It has been presented in a variety of forms, but his one object has been to drag them down from their excellency to the level of the world. Where there was not firm and decided resistance, steadfast in the faith, it never failed to accomplish its purpose. How many bright and happy saints have been caught in the subtle snare, and practically ruined as regards their life and testimony for God in the world. "The Unequal Yoke" has blasted many a fruitful tree in the garden of the Lord, and paralysed many an arm once strong and active in His service. We therefore feel there is a heavy responsibility lying upon us, and upon



all those who watch for souls, to sound the alarm and let the trumpet give a certain sound, that the Lord's dear lambs may be warned. "The Unequal Yoke" is presented to us in the Scriptures under various aspects. For simplicity they may be enclosed within the following circles :—

1. THE SOCIAL CIRCLE, or "The Unequal Yoke" with unconverted *companions*.
2. THE MATRIMONIAL CIRCLE, or "The Unequal Yoke" in *marriage*.
3. THE COMMERCIAL CIRCLE, or "The Unequal Yoke" in *business*.
4. THE RELIGIOUS CIRCLE, or "The Unequal Yoke" in the *worship* and *service* of God.

### The Social Circle.

The first of these is a special snare to the young. Unconverted companions have been the means of leading many young believers back to the world. Make a clean cut with all your worldly companions and associates if you want to go on with God. You cannot possibly have communion with God and with the world too. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is ENMITY with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the ENEMY of God" (James iv. 4). "If any man love the

*world*, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). This is very clear and definite; there is no difficulty about it. If you get into friendship with the world, your friendship with God ceases. You join hands with those who disown His authority, reject His Son, and resist His Spirit; you go over to Satan's ranks, and take sides against God. How could you thus expect the smile of God upon your soul? How could you ask for His eye to guide you, or His arm to defend you? When the believer joins the ranks of the world, he virtually takes himself from under the shadow of the Almighty, and puts himself under the protectorate of Satan. Could anything be more awful than this? Let the Lord's lambs ponder this, and take heed to their spirits and ways. The *beginning* of companionship with the world is to be guarded against. It is often very insidious.

A young man leaves his country home and goes to reside in the city. Godly parents, and a circle of Christian companions, are left behind. He arrives in the city a perfect stranger. His spirit feels the change; everything is new. He is surrounded by worldly young men in the office or workshop. When business is over, he goes to the house of a stranger where he lodges. The Christians to whose fellowship he has been introduced are cold and formal, and the meetings are few and stereotyped. He walks in and out without becoming acquainted with anybody,

and by-and-by he loses heart. All this, alas ! is not infrequently the case. The young men in the office are kind and obliging. They invite him out for an evening ; he consents, and goes. The devil sees his opportunity ; he spreads his net, and the young believer's feet are ensnared. Happy is the young man who has learned to live alone with God, and to find his solace in meditation on His Word. May the young believers present here to-night acquire this blessed habit. Learn to live and walk with God ; then, no matter where your lot is cast, you will never lose your company.

“ A lonely heart that leans on God  
Is happy anywhere.”

Take a decided stand for God, at all times, in all places. Where you are at work, where you live, and in fact everywhere : let it be distinctly understood from the very first hour that you belong to Jesus Christ. Do not allow the devil to shut your mouth or lower your colours at the beginning. When you go for the *first* time into a new lodging, or to a new workshop, or among strangers ; let your testimony be clear and ringing. It will save you lots of trouble afterwards. When they see that you are unflinching and fearless, they will soon leave off inviting you to worldly games and entertainments.

Beware of giving the smallest countenance to those semi-religious entertainments, where

what they call "sacred melodies" and "worldly songs" are made to blend, and where the children of God and the children of the devil are "yoked together" in the form of a choir. The devil succeeds in ensnaring believers by this means, when he cannot do it by the openly ungodly theatre or opera. A word about *amusements*. Evening parties made up of Christian and Christless young men and women are dangerous places for the people of God. Loose conversation, friivolous games, and all such fleshly indulgences are most hurtful to the life of God in the soul. It shows a low state of spiritual life, and a depraved palate, when the child of God can enjoy such things. *Set your face straight against them all*, and go on your way with God.

"Cricket clubs," "billiard clubs," and "football clubs" present other phases of "The Unequal Yoke" to young men; while *singing classes*, *dancing classes*, and *choirs* present the same to believers of both sexes alike. No amusement or recreation can be of God that leads you into association with the unconverted. Ruth said, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth i. 16). David said, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee" (Psalm cxix. 63). He had his hours of sweet intercourse in the wood with his companion Jonathan, who "loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel xxiii). Daniel with his "companions"

in Babylon, and Esther with her companions in Shushan, are fine examples of how godly young men and women may band themselves together to pray and work for God in the midst of surrounding ungodliness.

### The Matrimonial Yoke.

The Word of God distinctly declares that a child of God is not to be united in marriage with an unbeliever. To God's ancient people Israel the following command was given concerning the nations around them:—"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son, for they will *turn away thy son from following Me*" (Deut. vii. 3, 4). To the saints of the present age the Word is equally explicit:—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 14); and "Married . . . only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39). These are clearly the commandments of the Lord to us.

This aspect of "The Unequal Yoke" is a snare into which many mighty men have fallen. SOLOMON, the wisest of men, fell into this snare, and the "outlandish women" of the Ammonites and Moabites turned away his heart from God, and caused him to sin" (see 1 Kings xi. 1-13; Neh. xiii. 23-31). SAMSON, the *strongest* of men, was also caught in it, and shorn of his strength,

I do not suppose that any of you has the smallest thought of marriage with an unconverted partner at the present time; but we have found in the case of some, that the links that led to such a deplorable climax had been formed long before. The affections became engaged with the idol years before the final step was taken. My dear young brother and sister, let me lovingly and faithfully warn you against allowing your affections to go after a worldling. Watch the *beginning* of such a course. The link may be slender at first, but it will grow stronger; and once Satan gets the "Yoke" securely fastened upon your neck it will cost you something to get rid of it. How many tears and broken hearts might have been saved had the evil been checked at the beginning. If at the present moment there be a single link between your heart and that of a worldling, I implore of you to flee to the throne of grace, and, in deep humiliation of soul, acknowledge your sin to God, and seek grace to immediately renounce it. Whatever it may cost you, let the link be cut, and that completely and manifestly. Your soul will only thus escape from the snare of the fowler.

I knew a bright and happy Christian girl. A young man of her own age and rank proposed marriage to her. She allowed her affections to be engaged, yet she felt it would be wrong to marry the unbeliever. She put him off with

some paltry excuse, and told him to wait a little. The link remained uncut, and after twelve years of trifling with God and her conscience, she married the unbeliever. *She sits in sorrow, the wife of a drunkard.* But some may say, "there are many amiable, loving young men and young women who, although they do not say they are 'born again,' are religiously inclined, and willing to listen to the truth. Might I not be made the means of the conversion of such an one after we were married."

This is a very subtle device, and one largely made use of by Satan. The answer to it is simply this:—"God says you are not to be 'unequally yoked' with an unbeliever, and as His child He demands from you unhesitating, unquestioning obedience." It is vain for the heart that has departed from the Lord to carry out its own desire to marry an unbeliever, and then expect that God will convert him. God is a Sovereign, and He can work in spite of His people's sin, but He has not given the smallest ray of hope to the believer who enters into the "Unequal Yoke" with his eyes open, and in direct disobedience to God, to expect any such thing. Such a believer may count on many tears and sorrows, and years of domestic unhappiness. He may safely reckon on a blighted testimony and a famished soul, and on the certain fulfilment of the word—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

(Gal. vi. 7), but on nothing else. Morality and even religiousness have often been adopted to enable the unbeliever to gain his point, and after that was gained, the hypocrite came out in his true character.

Mary — was a Christian servant girl. Previous to her conversion she had been keeping company with a young mechanic. Immediately after she was converted she told him what had taken place, and that they could not any longer walk together until he was converted. He saw she was determined to act on what she had said, and every time he made up to her he was told the same thing. His tactics changed. He became very religious. He offered to give her the liberty to “go where she liked,” or even to go with her. The Lord sustained the soul of His child, and enabled her to resist him boldly and fearlessly. When he saw it was of no use, he threw off the sheep’s clothing, and came out in his true colours.

It is an easy thing for a believer to persuade himself that one upon whom his heart is set is a Christian. Very little proof satisfies the heart that is away from God, and the devil can easily furnish his child with the garments of a Christian profession, if they be necessary for his purpose. But who can rightly estimate the feelings of the child of God who finds out, when it is too late, that he has chosen for a partner in life an heir of wrath; and that she who ought



to be his helpmeet—his counterpart—his second self—has no more in common with him than “light” has with “darkness,” or “Christ” with “Belial?” There can be no sweet blending of hearts, no bowing of the knees together before the throne of grace; no holy intercourse on things touching the King. The unbeliever cannot rise to enjoy the things above, and so the child of God must descend to enjoy the things of the world.

I heard recently of a Christian young woman who had fallen in love with a worldly young man. An aged Christian warned her against it, and put before her what the issue would be. She sought to defend her conduct by saying he was moral, and willing to listen to the Gospel. “Well, well,” said the old disciple, “if you marry a child of the *devil*, you may expect to have some trouble with your *father-in-law*.” Her eyes were opened to see the relationship she was about to enter into, and the snare was broken.

### The Commercial Yoke.

“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together” (Deut. xxii. 10). This was one of Jehovah’s statutes to Israel, and the New Testament command, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” is the answer to the type. The “clean” and the “unclean” were not to be yoked together in the plough; nor is

the believer to be yoked together with the unbeliever in business. It ought to be conducted so as to please God. The distinction commonly drawn between "secular" and "sacred" things is certainly not found in the Word of God. We are told in that book, that "*Whatsoever* ye do, in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17); and "*Whatsoever* ye do, do ALL to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). It is perfectly clear from this that a believer's secular calling is to be conducted in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to the glory of God. When he enters his workshop on Monday morning, he ought to do so in the name of the Lord Jesus, as truly as he entered the place where the disciples gathered in that Name on the Lord's Day. He ought to "buy" and "sell" to the glory of God, and as under His holy eye, just as he worshipped and served beneath it on the first day of the week. It is by looking at business from this standpoint that we see the true character of "The Unequal Yoke." Two men enter into a business; the one is a child of God, the other a man of the world, and his only desire is to make money. They are committed to the action of each other. It is clear they cannot pull well together. What the unbeliever "sees no harm in," the believer's conscience will not allow; or else the believer must yield, compromising the truth, defiling his conscience, and vexing his righteous soul from day to day.

It invariably ends badly for the child of God. Prospects may be good for a time. It may appear as if prosperity and success attended them, but the word of the Lord is *firm* and *sure*; "The love of money is a *root* of all kinds of evil (R.V.); which, while some coveted after, they have *erred from the faith*, and **PIERCED THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS**" (1 Tim. vi. 10). Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, a child of God, entered into partnership with Ahaziah, king of Israel, a child of the devil, in a shipping adventure. They were to sail a fleet of ships to Tarshish. The Lord in mercy wrecked the whole fleet before they made their first trip. Thus ended the firm of "JEHOSHAPHAT, AHAZIAH, & Co."; and thus has ended many a co-partnery, bringing ruin and loss to all the saints of God in connection with it.

### The Religious Yoke.

In no department of the believer's life does the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," apply more fully than in matters pertaining to the worship and service of God. The children of God are a distinct and separate people, by redemption and calling. Their citizenship is in Heaven, as is also their inheritance and their hope. They are left down here to be "the salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." The wheat and tares

—that is, the children of God and the children of the wicked one—will both grow together in the field (and the field is the world) until the end (see Matt. xiii. 24-30, 38, 39); but they are not to be yoked together in the Church, or associated in the worship and service of God. The Church of Christ, as it is presented in the Scriptures, consists of the children of God. The unconverted, whether religious or profane, are forbidden to mingle with the saints of God, or share their privileges and responsibilities. We read of the early Church, that “all that believed were together,” and “of the rest durst no man join himself to them” (Acts ii. 44; v. 13). It is not so now. The greater number of the religious denominations are largely composed of the unconverted. What can a child of light have in common with these sons of darkness? You cannot become “communicants” or “members” in any of the churches where the unconverted are admitted without being “unequally yoked” with them. May the Lord preserve the feet of His saints, and enable each of us to yield hearty, unhesitating obedience to His Word.

## Separated Unto God.

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I walk as one that knows that he is treading  
    A stranger soil ;  
As one round whom a Serpent world is spreading  
    Its subtle coil.

I walk as one who feels that he is breathing  
    Ungential air ;  
For whom, as wiles, the tempter still is spreading  
    The bright and fair.

My steps I know are on the plains of Danger,  
    For sin is near ;  
But looking up I pass along a Stranger  
    In haste and fear.

The earth has lost its power to drag me downward,  
    Its spell is gone ;  
My course is now right upward and right onward  
    To yonder throne.

# Baptism

## BAPTISM.

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**A**T the time of my conversion to God, I was privileged to form the acquaintance of four young men, all believers in the Lord Jesus. We were in the habit of spending one night together every week, for united prayer and reading of the Word of God. These were happy seasons, and under God's blessing, many precious truths were thus unfolded to our souls. Reading the Scriptures together one evening, we came across the subject of baptism, and much to our astonishment, it became manifest, that we were not all of one mind about it. One thought the Scriptures clearly taught, that believers, and believers only, ought to be baptized, and that the proper form of baptism was by immersion. Another believed, that infant sprinkling was the right thing, while the third was of opinion, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the only essential baptism, and that it did not matter much, which of the two forms of water baptism was adopted, if any, as it was only an outward sign. I had

personally no mind on the matter. I had not thought much about it: but I suggested, that rather than introduce a subject of discord into our midst, it would be better to let the matter of baptism drop altogether, and if we should come across it again in our searching of the Scriptures, to pass it over, leaving each free to hold his own opinion. This, for the time, seemed a satisfactory way out of the difficulty; yet somehow we were not able to steer clear of the subject of baptism from that time onward. It would come up again and again, even when we were not looking for it, or in fact wanting to see it, and although we endeavoured to keep it out of court according to our arrangement, it became more and more apparent to all of us, that this was a very unsatisfactory way of getting rid of the matter. We had learned in some measure to value the Word of God as our Guide, and to accept its teachings as the only authority, in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Yet, here we were, of divided opinion, on a subject, concerning which God had clearly something to say, and yet we were unwilling, or afraid, to examine His Word, lest unpleasantness should arise amongst us. Of course we were aware that Christians generally, like ourselves, were much divided about baptism; that this has been so for hundreds of years, and that able and devoted Christians, were to be found on opposite sides in the controversy. Even



this did not give us entire satisfaction. If God had spoken about baptism, surely it was possible for us to know what He had said, unless He had departed from His ordinary way, and left the subject of baptism in obscurity. At any rate, we felt it impossible to shelve the matter any longer. God had said something about baptism, in His Word, that was certain, and we felt ourselves responsible to find out what He had said, and to allow His sayings to enlighten us. We resolved therefore, that we should each separately, and prayerfully, search the Word of God for a week, on the subject, carefully jotting down all the passages in which baptism is mentioned, afterwards arranging them in the following manner. *First*, as to the *Subjects* of baptism: then the *Mode* of baptism: and after that, the *Meaning* of baptism. At the same time, we agreed, to obtain whatever help we could, from Concordances, Lexicons, Commentaries, and Church History, to enable us to ascertain the proper meaning of words, and the practice of the Church in early times.

We had a busy week, and on the occasion of our next united meeting, we had each a considerable compilation of Scripture testimony on the subject, which, in the fear of God, we proceeded to compare and examine. I will endeavour to give here a brief *resumé* of what these papers contained; of that evening's conversation, and its results, because I think we

may thus be able to examine the *subject* of baptism, in a simple and straightforward manner, and at the same time, to raise and dispose of, the common difficulties, that present themselves to many, in connection with it.

We began by reading

### The Lord's Command for Baptism

as found in the commission given by Him to His disciples, before His ascension into Heaven. "Go ye therefore, and teach (or "make disciples of" margin) all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19-20). Then in Mark xvi. 15, we read "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

The former of these Scriptures is the Lord's own command to the preacher, the latter to the convert. They are both co-extensive with the command to preach the Gospel, and make disciples, and clearly while the one continues, so should the other. There is no hint given, that baptism might be given up, while the making of disciples continues, or that the *order* should be reversed, or the *subjects* changed. What the Lord said to His servants then, is His command for His servants still; and it is their

responsibility, whenever a sinner is brought to Christ, to receive Him as his Saviour and to own Him as his Lord, first to baptize him and then to teach him "all things" commanded by the Lord. In Mark, the word is to the *receiver* of the Gospel, the one believing in the Lord Jesus. *After* believing, he is to be baptized, and if the preacher fail to set before him the truth, yet his responsibility to obey it remains. This will be sufficient authority for water baptism, to all those who accept the Word of God as their Guide Book, and it will at the same time, answer the objections of those who speak of baptism as a thing of no account, "a carnal ordinance," and a "non-essential of Christianity." Strange it must appear to such, if they ever think, that the Son of God should have coupled with the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation—the grandest message earth will ever hear—"a thing of no account," and that those men who were sent forth on the glorious mission of making disciples, should be called upon to impose upon them "a meaningless ordinance," and a "non-essential of Christianity" at the earliest stage of their Christian life. Yet this is exactly what the reasonings of those who reject baptism amount to, no matter how they clothe them. We gather then, that the Lord's command for baptism is unassailable, and that it abides unrepealed to the present hour. We next examined our papers to find—

## A COMMAND FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

But not one was there. In all our searching of the Word, we had not come across a *single text* commanding the baptism of infants. This was significant. Surely, if the Lord had intended that infants should be baptized, He would have said so. If He has said nothing whatever about it, we are not at liberty to add to His Words, or to institute an ordinance in His Name, that He has not appointed.

**THE SUBJECTS.**

**Who are to be baptized ?**

**Believers or Infants ?**

We next proceeded to examine the Scriptures as to the subjects of Baptism, and on this we found an array of evidence that quite astonished us. In the Lord's commission as recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, the order is, first to "make disciples," next to baptize them, and in Mark xvi. 16, it is, "He believeth and is baptized." From this we gather, that the subjects of baptism are to be believers; and only believers. The *Examples* recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, confirm this. In Acts ii. 41—the first recorded case of baptism after the Lord's commission was given—we read, that "They that gladly received His Word, were baptized." The receiving of the Word preceded baptism. In Chapter viii. 5, the Gospel was carried to the city of Samaria by Philip, and "*When* they

believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women" (Acts viii. 12). They *believed*: they were *baptized*. The Ethiopian eunuch's conversion is next recorded, immediately followed by his baptism in water (Acts viii. 36-39). The next example is that of Saul of Tarsus, who first met the Lord on the way to Damascus, and was afterwards addressed by Ananias as "Brother Saul" and by him baptized as a believer. The Gospel was then preached by Peter to the Gentiles (Acts x. 34-43). Cornelius and those with him heard the Word, received the Holy Ghost, and were baptized in the Name of the Lord (verses 44, 48). It is interesting here to note, that the possession of the Holy Ghost did not set aside their baptism in water, but was the reason given by Peter for proceeding with it. Surely this is sufficient answer to those who boast that "the baptism of the Spirit" is the only baptism, and that baptism in water is unnecessary. In chap. xvi. 13-15, we have the baptism of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened," and her house, and in the same chapter, the baptism of the jailor of Philippi and his house. When the Gospel was preached by Paul at Corinth, "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts xviii. 8). They heard, they believed, they were baptized. At Ephesus, twelve men, disciples of

John, who had been baptized *before* they heard the Gospel, were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xix. 51), an answer surely to those who maintain that baptism in infancy, before conversion, is equivalent to the baptism of believers after it. From these examples recorded in the Word of God for our instruction, we gather that the proper and only subjects for baptism, are believers, and we look in vain in the Word of God to find a single instance of the baptism of an infant.

### **The Baptism of Households.**

It is sometimes urged by those who contend for infant baptism—in fact it is their principal argument—that we are told in Scripture that whole households were baptized, and that there may have been infants in these households. To say the least, this is a very slender foundation to build upon. When men are driven to seek their authority for infant baptism in a “supposition,” it shows how hard up they are for “proof.” Yet it seems to satisfy the conscience of many, and they take it for granted, that the baptism of certain households conclusively proves that infants were baptized. Let us see. There are *three* households said to have been baptized, and God has told us somewhat definitely of what they were composed. He has not left us to guess. There was the house of the jailor of Philippi. We are told

that Paul and Silas spake unto him the Word of the Lord, "and to *all* that were in his house" (Acts xvi. 32), and that "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (v. 24). They all *heard*, they all *believed*, they were all *baptized*. So that if there was an infant, it was a *hearing and believing* one, and a proper subject for baptism. (2.) There was "the house of Stephanas" (1 Cor. xvi. 46) baptized by Paul, and in 1 Cor. xvi. 15, it is said they "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." Babies do not usually minister, they need to be ministered unto. (3.) There is the house of Lydia (Acts xvi. 15), and this has always been the stronghold of the advocates of infant baptism. "Lydia's baby" is their principal witness. But there are quite a number of things we have to "suppose" here. First, that she was married—if she was, where was her husband, and why was she in business on her own account as a seller of purple? Then we have to "suppose" that she had a family, and brought them with her from Thyatira to Philippi, a distance of over three hundred miles! All this is pure speculation: the Book says nothing about it. What it does say is, that there were "brethren" in the house of Lydia, who were comforted by Paul and Silas, before they departed (Acts xvi. 40). Thus God overturns the whole, by telling us that in the house of Lydia were "brethren"—a name given only to believers.

### The Testimony of Honest Men

Who are regarded as able expositors, ancient and modern, we found fully confirmed us in this. Here is their testimony. *Luther* asserts:—It cannot be proved that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or by the first Christians after Christ." *Calvin* says—"It is nowhere expressed by the evangelists, that infants were baptized." *Erasmus*, who wrote in *Luther's* day, says—"It is nowhere expressed in the Apostles' writings that they baptized children." *Jeremy Taylor* testifies—"It is against the perpetual analogy of Christ's doctrine, to baptize infants." *Professor Moses Stuart* says—"Commands, or plain and certain examples, relative to it in the New Testament, I do not find."

### The History of Infant Baptism.

It may be naturally asked, how comes it that infant baptism, concerning which the Scriptures give neither command nor example, has come to be so extensively practised, by almost every sect in Christendom? The answer to this is very simple. It was originated, along with other innovations, when men began to lay aside the Word of God, and substitute their own traditions in its place. It was introduced at a time when the very foundations of the Gospel were being frittered away, and when the wretched theory of baptismal regeneration was made to sup-



plant the fundamental doctrine of the new Birth. *Neander*, the Church Historian, informs us, that when "the notion of a magical influence, or charm, connected with the Sacraments" gained ground, infant baptism was necessarily introduced. It owes its origin to the African Church, which at the same time "introduced infant communion: giving wine to children incapable of taking bread." The "charm" of Infant Baptism was, that it was supposed to eradicate original sin, followed by *Penance* for the removal of actual sin. Then *Purgatory* completed the purification after death. This is the doctrine of the Church of Rome. The Church of England, in "the Prayer Book," plainly declares that in Baptism an infant is made "a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." The Presbyterian "Shorter Catechism" says that the baptism of infants "signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ." Are these things so? Are all who have been "sprinkled" in infancy "ingrafted into Christ?" Do they even profess to be?

### **The Mode of Baptism.**

IS IT BY SPRINKLING, OR BY IMMERSION?

There is no serious difficulty as to the Scriptural mode of baptism. All intelligent readers and students of the Bible—those who practise infant sprinkling included—admit that the original mode of baptism was by immersion.

It would be impossible to arrive at any other conclusion, from the testimony of Scripture. The Greek word "*Baptizo*," which occurs some eighty times in the New Testament, means—"to dip"—"to immerse." Had our translators put it into English, they could not have represented it by any other term, certainly not by "sprinkling." But then, if the translators of 1611 had translated the Greek word "*Baptizo*" into the English word "immerse," that would have upset the practice of the Church, and King James had given them distinct instructions not to do this, by their translation. So these good men being unable to honestly translate "*Baptizo*" "to sprinkle," resolved not to translate it at all, but to change the "o" into an "e," and thus Anglify the untranslated word. And so we have the anomaly of a Greek word in an Anglified form, standing here and there in our New Testament: a perpetual witness to the traditions of men.

The testimony of scholars of all sections of the professing Church, bears witness to this. *Dean Stanley*—a leading light in the Church of England, and Dean of Westminster, says—"It was an entire submersion in deep water. The meaning of the word is, that those who were baptized, were plunged, submerged, immersed, in water." *Dr. Chalmers*, of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland says—"The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion.

The prevalent style of the administration in the Apostles' days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water." *John Wesley*, commenting on Romans vi. says—"The allusion is, to the ancient mode of baptizing by immersion." These are valuable testimonies, from men whose scholarship none can question, and *who themselves practised the sprinkling of infants*. The Scripture examples clearly show that immersion was the practice of the early Church. Concerning the eunuch's baptism we read—"And they went down both INTO the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up OUT OF the water" (Acts viii. 38-39). Of the baptism of the Lord Himself it is written "Jesus when He was baptized went up straightway OUT OF the water" (Matt. iii. 16). For 1300 years sprinkling was unknown. In 1559, it was introduced to Scotland by John Knox, on his return from Geneva, and from Scotland it made its way to England, in the days of Queen Elizabeth. And how did it find a place in the Westminster Confession? That also has a history. "The Westminster Assembly discussed in 1643, the question of baptism. 24 voted for immersion: 24 for sprinkling. The Chairman, Dr. Lightfoot, gave his casting vote for sprinkling:" and so *sprinkling* went down in the Westminster Standards as baptism, and people receive and act upon it, as if it had come there by direct

commandment from Heaven : whereas it was by the vote of man, and by a majority of *one*. People are better to know the foundations on which they build, and surely this one must be admitted to be slender.

The Scriptures, which are usually brought forward to

#### PROVE INFANT BAPTISM,

we next examined. The first and chief of these is 1 Cor. vii. 14. It reads—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but *now are they holy*." There is not a word about these children being baptized. Yet this is what has been pressed into the passage, by those who want Scripture for sprinkling infants. But, as Dean Stanley says of the passage, it "is conclusive against the practice of infant baptism." the children are "holy," in the same sense as the unconverted husband is said to be "sanctified," and *only* in that sense. They do not become *Christians* on account of their parents' faith ; they need to be "born again," as others. Until they are, they cannot be baptized as *believers* : and there is no *command* for baptizing unbelievers, old or young, in the Word of God. If you say this sanctions the baptism of the children of believing parents—"infants of such as are members of the visible

church"—then, so it does the unconverted husbands of believing wives, and the *food* that believers eat (1 Tim. iv. 5), for these also are "sanctified" in the same sense exactly as the children are holy. Why not baptize them also? There is the same authority for the one as for the other.

It has been said by others, that "baptism came in the place of circumcision," and that as *every* man-child born of Israelitish parents was circumcised, so every child of Christian parents ought to be baptized? But where is the proof in support of this assertion? As a matter of fact, baptism did *not* come in the place of circumcision, for Timothy was circumcised long *after* baptism had come (Acts xvi. 3), and so strong were some in favour of it, that "the apostles, elders, and brethren," of the church of Jerusalem had to come together to consider the question of circumcision being forced upon converted Gentiles, as necessary to their salvation. If baptism had come in place of circumcision, that would have been the time to say so, and finish the controversy. But there is not a word about baptism. Moreover, the analogy fails. A Jewish man-child received circumcision, as a sign, as soon as he entered the family by natural birth. The order was birth first, then circumcision; and so it is now. First, regeneration, or spiritual birth, then baptism; but to make the analogy teach baptism before conversion, you

must circumcise the Jewish child *before* it is born, and even then the baby girls would not be baptized at all. The irresistible conclusion to which we were forced was, that the Scriptures that are supposed to teach that infants were baptized, do not teach anything of the kind, but exactly the opposite.

### **The Meaning of Baptism.**

We further gather from the study of the Epistles that the baptism of believers by immersion is a typical ordinance, and not a meaningless ceremony. In being buried under the waters of baptism, the believer shows forth in figure, his death and burial with Christ (Rom. vi. 4), his separation from the world (Col. ii. 12-20), and his end as a sinner in the flesh (Gal. ii. 20). In being raised up out of this mystic grave, he confesses his resurrection with Christ to newness of life (Rom. vi. 5-9); his part in a new creation (II. Cor. v. 17), and his desire henceforth as a risen saint to seek things above (Col. iii. 1). When the *meaning* of this great typical ordinance, became clear to us from the written Word, it was not difficult to see why Satan had so constantly and continuously sought to pervert it, and to supplant it by a counterfeit. The death and resurrection of Christ was the defeat and utter destruction of Satan's kingdom, and full well *he* knows that when the Christian lays hold of this great truth

by faith, and reckons with God about it, *he* also practically passes beyond his power. Baptism is the divinely-appointed "likeness," given to the believer by his God, to keep alive the power of this great truth experimentally in him, and to enable him to practically give effect to it in all his relations to men and things down here. As the light of this shone into our minds, and the power of it began to move our hearts, the whole subject of baptism stood forth before us, in all the brightness and beauty of that which it expressed, and the traditional and meaningless thing called "Infant Baptism"—for which we had failed to find a single Scripture command or example—for ever lost its claim to our obedience, or even our respect. Never before did it appear so hideous in its deformity, as it did that hour, in the light of the Heaven-sent reality. We bowed our knees in thanksgiving to our God, and with His words on our lips "I esteem *all* thy precepts concerning ALL things to be right, and *I hate every false way*" (Psa. cxix. 128), we arose, and forthwith we were buried with Christ in Baptism. Of course the world was angry; even some of our friends and fellow-believers thought we had gone wrong, but we had the testimony that we were pleasing God, and time has confirmed that "the statutes of the Lord are right" and that in "*keeping* of them there is great reward."

## HYMN.

### Sung at the Baptism of Believers.

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AROUND Thy grave, Lord Jesus,  
Thine empty grave, we stand;  
With hearts all full of praises,  
To keep Thy blest command;  
Our souls by faith rejoicing  
To trace Thy path of love,  
Through death's dark angry billows,  
Up to the throne above.

Lord Jesus, we remember  
The travail of Thy soul,  
When in Thy love's deep pity,  
The waves did o'er Thee roll;  
Baptized in death's deep waters,  
For us Thy blood was shed;  
For us the Lord of glory  
Was numbered with the dead.

O Lord, Thou now art risen;  
Thy travail all is o'er;  
For sin Thou once hast suffer'd;  
Thou liv'st to die no more:  
Lo! death and hell are vanquish'd  
By Thee, the church's Head;  
And now we share Thy triumphs,  
Thou First-born from the dead!



Into Thy death baptized,  
We own with Thee we died ;  
With Thee, our Life, are risen,  
And shall be glorified.  
From sin, the world and Satan,  
We're ransom'd by Thy blood,  
And now would walk as strangers,  
Alive with Thee to God.

# The Lord's Supper

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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**A** HAPPY and devoted Christian lad of our acquaintance has stamped upon the cover of his well-marked Bible the words—"Enquire Within about Everything." He had happily learned in the early years of his Christian life that the Word of God is a sure and all-sufficient guide, not only in the matter of salvation, but in everything connected with the Christian's path and testimony here on earth. This great, this fundamental principle of the Christian life, is worthy of the closest attention of *all* who are the children of God. Its importance cannot be over-estimated; it is paramount among the laws of God's kingdom. A joyful acceptance of it and a hearty submission to it, is the sure way of progress and blessing, while its neglect always leads to backsliding and barrenness. To be able, truthfully and honestly, to say—"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. cxix. 105)

is the secret of safe guidance, sure direction, and real progress in the Christian life. To be ever able to testify "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (Psa. cxix. 128), is the only safeguard and preservation from the errors and traditions of men. The Word of God must be the standard of doctrine, the rule of faith, and the final appeal in everything to the believer. Neither the voice of the Church nor the opinions of men must be allowed for a moment to supersede the supreme authority of the Word of God, in which all the legislation, all the commandments, all the evidences, and all the details of their observance, for all saints of all ages, have been preserved for the obedience of faith. And it is at once the privilege and responsibility of every true believer to "enquire within," and daily search that blessed Word, for knowledge and information, for guidance and direction in all things on which God has spoken. Alas! that so many who bear the Christian name should give so little honour to the Word of God and its supreme authority, or allow themselves to be so easily led astray by the traditions of men. Yet, blessed be God, that Word remains in all its sufficiency to guide the simple and true-hearted disciple, and to assure him of that which is of the Lord and well-pleasing with Him.

Let us open the Word of God, then, reverently, inquiringly, with prayer in our

hearts, "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me" (Psa. xxv. 5), and learn what is there said about the Lord's Supper.

In the *Gospels* we have the INSTITUTION of it by the Lord Jesus.

In the *Acts* we have the CELEBRATION of it by the early disciples.

In the *Epistles* we have the EXPLANATION of it by the Holy Ghost, with full directions as to the manner of its observance till the Lord's return.

How simple all this makes it. If the Lord has spoken, it is ours to hear. If He has given commandment, it is ours to obey.

### **The Lord's Supper Instituted.**

On the night before He suffered death on Calvary, the Lord Jesus with His twelve disciples had gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish passover for the last time. The type was about to give place to the antitype—"Christ our passover sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 8). While the passover feast was in progress, Judas the traitor went out (John xiii. 30), and the Lord, left with His eleven true followers, took bread and wine, and instituted the simple memorial feast, saying "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19). Nothing could be more simple, more expressive. Yet alas! How soon it was corrupted and perverted,

alike in its meaning and the manner of its observance, until it became an elaborate ritual and a mischievous denial of the very death it was meant to "shew forth" or proclaim (1 Cor. xi. 26, R.V.).

The Lord's Supper is not a "sacrifice for the remission of sin," as the Church of Rome blasphemously says, while her priests profess to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Nor is it the "real presence of the body and blood of Christ," as the Church of England ritualist affirms, with farce of altar, vestments, and human priesthood. Nor is it "a sacrament" which is "made effectual for salvation," as Protestant Confessions of Faith and Catechisms have it. "Sacrament" comes from a Latin word, which means an "oath of allegiance," the vow of a Roman soldier to serve his king and country—a thought entirely foreign to and destructive of the doctrine of salvation by grace, in virtue of the finished work of Christ upon the Cross. All these corruptions of the Lord's Supper destroy its meaning, subvert the very foundation of the Gospel, delude thousands of souls by giving them a false foundation on which to build, and fill the world's churches with unconverted communicants, who expect in some mysterious way, by means of this "ordinance," to gain favour with God, and reach Heaven at last.

From 1 Cor. xi. 23, we learn that the

Apostle Paul received from the glorified Lord in Heaven a fresh communication regarding this feast, and the manner of its observance for all time "till He come," so that nothing was left for man's ingenuity to add, or for church councils or courts to alter. All has been provided for, perfectly, continuously, and unalterably, by Divine legislation, and recorded in the Word for the Church's obedience. To alter, to supplant, or to violate these Divine rubrics is sacrilege and rebellion against the rule of Heaven. There is no priest or presiding minister officially required at this "forget-me-not" feast; the Lord Himself is there, and those who gather around Him to keep the feast appear on a common level as brethren of one family, members of one body, priestly worshippers in one sanctuary, all made equally near to God by the one sacrifice of Christ, and equally fit to offer praise in the holiest by the one anointing of the Holy Ghost of which they share in common. No one takes the place of the Lord, who broke the bread and gave to each a portion (Luke xxii, 19)—although some, who are clear enough as to the sin of priestly assumption, seem to think it needful that one from among the gathered saints should take the bread and break it for the rest, in imitation of the Lord—but the words of 1 Cor. x. 16—"The bread which *we* break"—leave no room for such a function, and remind us that the

Lord, being now personally in Heaven, the Spirit who has come from Him thus glorified, has created and sustains a fellowship among saints which did not and could not exist when the Supper was instituted. Thus we find in 1 Cor. xi. 23-24, that the Lord's Supper is to be observed in the Christian assembly by the church "come together" in one place, under the Spirit's guidance, where Divine order obtains, and where human interference and expediency must have no place whatever.

### **The Lord's Supper Celebrated.**

In the Acts and Epistles we learn *who* are to partake of the Lord's Supper, *how often* it is to be observed, and for *how long*.

It is not a feast for the *unconverted*. It is not for "every parishioner" as the Prayer Book says: nor for "the baptized," nor for all who "profess faith" in Christ as the Saviour. How can those who reject Christ remember Him? How dare those who despise His death as their only way of salvation "shew it forth?" No greater sin is committed on earth in the sight of Heaven than by crowds of worldlings, many of them utterly ungodly in their lives, others with a mere garnishing of "Sunday religion," being invited and encouraged by their ministers to "renew their vows" at the yearly sacrament. True believers who associate with them, and by



partaking of the same bread and wine, *express* their fellowship with the ungodly, help on the awful sham, and openly disobey the Lord's command—"Be not *unequally yoked* together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 14). Some have tried to defend their conduct by saying that Judas the traitor was a partaker of the Lord's Supper. The Scriptures shew that he was *not*, for we read in Matthew xxvi. 23-25, that while he was present at the passover—the *national* feast of the Jews—after he received "the sop," which was part of the paschal feast, "he went out immediately" (John xiii. 30), before the institution of the Supper. And it ought to be a solemn remembrance to those who claim him as their pattern that ere another week he was in "his own place" in hell (Acts i. 24).

We read in Acts xx. 7, that "on the first day of the week"—that is, the Lord's Day (Rev. i. 10), the memorial of the Lord's Resurrection, "the disciples came together to break bread." Here we learn how the saints of early time understood the Lord's command, and when and how they obeyed it. It was "disciples" who came together, not to hear a sermon, or to preach the Gospel, but to "break bread." This was the paramount purpose of their coming together. There would be thanksgiving, praise, and ministry of a character in keeping with the object of their gathering, as we learn from 1 Cor. xiv.—where the assembly is seen as

gathered together—but the prime object of their coming together was to “break bread” in remembrance of Christ. And this was their habit on the “first day of the week”—not once a year, or once a quarter, or once a month, but as the memorial day came round the memorial feast was spread. And it is worth observing, that the “day” and the “supper” are especially fitted for each other by a word being used by the Holy Ghost to mark them off, nowhere else used in the New Testament. “The Lord’s Day” and “the Lord’s Supper” (Rev. i. 10; 1 Cor. xi. 20), or as they may be more correctly read, “The Lordly Day” and “The Lordly Supper”—the supper for the day and the day for the supper. To eat the Lord’s Supper is the greatest privilege and the highest form of fellowship with God and His people to which the believer is called upon earth. None can treat it lightly or habitually neglect it, without suffering infinite loss. Yet, alas! how many prefer to be in their pews listening to a sermon, or on the platform preaching to his fellows, rather than quietly sitting in the presence of their Lord at His table, where the spikenard of their worship would give forth a sweet fragrance (Song i. 12), of more value in His esteem (John xii. 37) than much that passes as devotion and philanthropy. To serve the Lord in ministering to His saints, or in preaching to the unconverted, is indeed a holy privilege,

which may the Lord give each of us grace to fulfil in our varied spheres—but it is a higher honour still to banquet with the Captain of our salvation, and to silently and unitedly proclaim His death in a world where He is still despised or forgotten. This honour have all His saints, and when healthy and happy in soul, they will joyfully respond to the Lord's last command—"This do in remembrance of Me"—by singing as they go to the place where the Lord has placed His Name, and where His saints are gathered around Him—

"I joyed when to the Christ of God;  
Come up—He says to me."

No hour of all the week is comparable to this, for there we see the Master's face and hear His voice, and are strengthened for the walk and warfare of the week we have thus entered.

### **The Lord's Supper Explained.**

In the Epistles—especially the First Epistle to the Corinthians—we learn the intimate connection between the Lord's Supper and the church or assembly of saints, as gathered together locally in the Lord's Name. There is nothing to indicate that the Supper is to be observed by individuals, or by promiscuous companies of professed believers unknown to each other, who casually meet at conferences

and such like. The Lord's Supper is part of the fellowship of saints, and may not be separated from the privileges and responsibilities of the Christian assembly. Nor is the assembly at liberty to receive believers to this one privilege who refuse to share the others of which it forms a part. The adage that "The Lord's Table is for all the Lord's people" has been made to mean that if one confesses his faith in Christ, he may hold any unsound doctrine, or continue in any evil practice or remain in any unscriptural association he pleases, and yet claim a right to "break bread" whenever he thinks fit. The Scripture teaches otherwise. Those who desire to share the privileges and responsibilities of God's Assembly, must be received to it (Acts ix. 26-28), and continue steadfastly in "the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). Thus the Lord's Supper is to be observed according as "He has commanded," by his saints throughout the whole of the present age, "till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26), which is only now "a very little while" (Heb. x. 37, R.V.). Till then, may the Lord's redeemed ones, for whom He died on Calvary, for whom in unwearied love He lives on the right hand of God, for whom He soon will come with a shout of welcome and of triumph, continue to gather on the appointed day, and in the appointed way, to "shew forth" the death of Christ as the

Sacrifice and Saviour, to remember Christ alive for evermore their Lord and Head, while they wait in patient vigil for Christ their Hope, to whose image they shall be transformed, and in whose presence they shall dwell for ever and for aye.

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## Keeping The Feast.

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IN sacred fellowship we meet,  
To celebrate our Saviour's death ;  
His blood we drink, His flesh we eat,  
His people feed on Him by faith.

We worship him who bore the cross,  
We glory in His death alone ;  
The world itself appears but loss  
To those by whom His name is known.

On earth His dying love shall be  
Our spring of hope, our theme of joy ;  
And, when in heav'n our Lord we see,  
His praise shall all our powers employ.

**“What Church  
Should I Join?”**

## “WHAT CHURCH SHOULD I JOIN?”

MANY of you here to-night have recently been converted to God. A few weeks ago you were asking the all-important question—“What must I do to be saved?” And this you had answered, by the Word of God telling you, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi. 31). You *have* believed, and you *are* saved, for God was as good as His Word. As young believers, other inquiries now rise among you, and among these, as some of you have expressed it, is the question—

**What Church should I join?**

**or, Where and with whom can I have Christian Fellowship?**

This is a very important question, and I am glad to know that many of you are deeply exercised before God about it. Next to your

souls' salvation and your individual walk with Him, nothing can be of more importance than to be guided aright in the matter of "Church Fellowship." Your decision in this will have an abiding effect on your after-life, either for good or evil. Many seem to think it does not matter much where they go, or with whom they have fellowship, provided they get on smoothly ; and consequently they make it a matter of their own choice "*what Church they join,*" or, as it happens very often, they just drop in where they have been in the "*habit*" of going, and where, perhaps, their parents are "members." Now this would be all right if God had left it an "open question"—a thing to "please themselves" about. But if He has given His will on the matter, it surely becomes every one of His people to find out what that is, and then unhesitatingly to do it.

In seeking to answer your question—" *What Church should I join ?*" I would impress upon my own soul and yours the *absolute necessity* of being guided *wholly* and *solely* by the Word of God. Men's ideas and advices are of no use here ; not even the counsel of a pious parent. The Word of God, and that alone, must answer the question. And this makes it at once simple and easy ; for if God has told me in His Word *where* and *with whom* I am to have Church Fellowship, it ceases to be a question of what *I think* or what *my friends* think, or what any man



says, and becomes a question of "What saith the Lord?" Where does He say I am to be, and where does He forbid me to go? That is the point to get settled first of all, and then, no matter how much opposition may arise to hinder you, or how much failure there may be around you, you'll have the consciousness that you stand where God has commanded you, and have in your soul the testimony that you are pleasing Him. And what can be put into the balance against that? Nothing; no, nothing! For if you have the witness that you are pleasing God, and that He is on your side, it will make you as bold as a lion, even if earth and hell be engaged against you.

We will open *the Book* then—the *precious Book*—the "lamp to our feet"—the "light to our path"—and see what God says about the Church, and who they are that compose it. When once we get to know this, there will not be so much difficulty left about the "joining."

First of all then—the word "Church" is never used in the Scriptures as the name of a building used for religious purposes, as many of us from our childhood have been accustomed to use it. It is always used in connection with persons, and signifies "called out" ones. Turn to Acts xx. 28. There we read of "*the Church of God*, which He hath purchased with His own blood"; and again, "Christ . . . loved *the Church* and gave Himself for it" (Eph. v. 25).

Here we see *Whose* the Church is, and at what a cost it was purchased. It is the "*Church of God*"—not the Church of a nation, a country, a creed, or a person, but "of God"; purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and the object of His everlasting love. Like the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, sold all to buy it—the Lord Jesus gave Himself to obtain the Church for His Bride, to be the sharer of His glory for ever. It is spoken of in the New Testament (and not found in the Old at all, save in type) under the figures of a Body, a Temple, a House, a Bride, and a City. It is called the Body of Christ, the Temple of God, the House of God, the Bride of the Lamb, and the Holy City, New Jerusalem (see Eph. ii. 22, 23; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Rev. xxi. 2-9).

Of His Body, Christ risen and glorified is the one and *only* Head; for God hath made "Him to be *the Head* over all things, to the Church which is His Body (Eph. i. 22, 23); and, "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is *the Head* of the Body, the Church" (Col. i. 17, 18). To Him the Church is called to be in subjection, as the wife is to her husband (Eph. v. 23, 24), and to Him alone.

No Pope or Archbishop, no Council or Assembly, has any Divine warrant to legislate for the Church of God: they have never been called to issue bulls, frame canons, or devise

laws, outside the Word of God, for her obedience. Her Head yet lives, seated at the right hand of God, to nourish, sustain, and rule His Body; the Spirit of God dwells within each member, uniting them to the Living Head; and the Word of God, containing all His counsel, is in our hands. What more need we?

As there is but one Head, so also is there but one Body (Eph. iv. 4). It is composed of many members, differing in rank and attainment, even as in our natural bodies we have the eye, the hand, the foot; but though many members, yet only one Body (1 Cor. xii. 20), "for by one Spirit are we all baptised into *one* body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Each member has a place and sphere assigned to him by God. The unity is God-made and God-sustained. Man never formed it, and he can never break it, because its keeping is in the hands of God—it is Divine. By forming many and varied sects, man may ignore or deny this unity; but that in no way annuls it. The Church, viewed as the Body of Christ, is *one*, in spite of all man's failure and schism; it embraces every child of God, north, south, east, and west, by whatever name they may be known among men. They are all redeemed by the same precious blood, sealed and indwelt by the same Spirit, encircled and enlocked by the same Almighty Arms of Love, and to be in the same glorious home throughout eternity. These are everlasting links between saint and saint—

they shall know no decay, though, sad to say, they are oftentimes disowned here, while others of man's making take their place.

Dear young believer, this is the Church as spoken of in the Scriptures; begun on the day of Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost—at present being gathered out from the nations of the earth through the preaching of the Gospel, having no earthly inheritance or potentate—separate alike from Jew and Gentile—One New Man—One Holy Church—the Bride of Christ, to be completed and presented to Him when He comes.

Of this Body (the only one mentioned in the Scriptures) you are already a "member"; you have already been "joined" to it. Nothing on your part can make you any more a member than you at present are, and you cannot unchurch yourself. By the act of God you became a member of the Church, which is Christ's body, on the day of your conversion, and you'll continue so for all eternity. *Hallelujah.*

Part of the members of this Church are now absent from the body and "present with the Lord;" others are for the present living in the world among men, and must needs live in some city, town, or country. It is not the will of God that they should remain isolated one from another, for His Word has said: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. x. 25). The Christ-

life within each of them also craves for fellowship with other members in whom the same life dwells, for "we are members one of another." Their association must therefore be one of life, and not mere outward uniformity; and the *dead*—that is, the unconverted—cannot have any share in it, for what fellowship has life with death, or light with darkness? Clearly, none whatever. Therefore it is impossible that anything like true fellowship can exist in those Churches where the living and the dead—the children of God and the children of the devil—are massed together. God distinctly forbids that such should be, in the words: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. vi. 14-17). The tares and the wheat are to grow side by side in the world—(and "the field is the *world*," remember, and *not the Church* see Matt. xiii. 38)—until the end; but in the Church of the living God the unsaved should have no place: they ought to be "without" (see 1 Thes. iv. 12; Col. iv. 5).

It was so at the beginning. We find in the New Testament there were local Churches, such as the Church at Jerusalem (Acts viii. 1), the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 12), the Churches of Galatia (Gal. i. 2), and the Church in the

house of Nymphas (Col. iv. 15). These Churches consisted of believers, and believers only. They were gathered into a divinely-constituted fellowship in subjection to Christ as Lord, the pattern of which remains for us to follow. They received all\* whom the Lord had received, even those who were "weak" and required "support" (see Rom. xiv. 1; 1 Thes. v. 14); and to have been narrower than this they would have become a *sect*. In their assemblies they worshipped God, guided by the Spirit (1 Cor. xiv.); they observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7); but we hear no word of any "presiding minister" or "elder" at the head of the table. They owned and received the gifts of the risen Christ—evangelists, pastors, and teachers; but they did not choose, elect, or ordain their own ministers; nor was there any such person known in these Churches as the modern "minister," who is chosen by the congregation to do all the preaching, teaching, and shepherding of the flock. At Antioch there were five teachers (Acts xiii. 1), and at Philippi several bishops (Phil. i. 1) in one church. How would that do now-a-days? What

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\* The only warrant for the REJECTION or EXCLUSION of a believer from Church-fellowship is, that he be guilty of any of those sins specified in Scripture, for which God excludes him (see 1 Cor. v. 11-13; Rom. xvi. 17; Titus iii. 10).

would become of "the minister"? These Churches owned and obeyed those whom God had fitted to rule (Heb. xiii. 7, 17); they exercised godly discipline towards the erring, and, if anyone among them became guilty of holding and teaching evil doctrine (Rev. ii. 17, 20), or of immoral practice (1 Cor. v. 11), they put away the offender.

Such are a few of the characteristic features of the Churches mentioned in Scripture, and they are the *patterns* of what Churches ought to be till the Lord come. I have no more right to devise a new *order* or *fellowship* in the Church of God than I have to make a new way of salvation. God has given both in His Word, and it endureth for ever.

When anyone was converted he did not require to ask, "What Church should I join?" for there was only one Church in each place, and he there and then became identified with it.

For example, in Jerusalem there were one hundred and twenty disciples on the day of Pentecost in an upper room. Three thousand more were converted; and we read, "the same day there were *added* unto them about three thousand souls, . . . and all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 41, 44). And this was not only on the "special occasion" of that "great revival," but "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 43),

“and *of the rest* durst no man join himself unto them” (Acts v. 13).

There were no unconverted “young communicants,” no “dead members” in that Church: they “*durst* not join themselves to them.” The ungodly Jews carried on their religion in the Temple, headed by the high priest and his “colleagues,” who condemned the Son of God, even as the unconverted religious people do now in their churches and chapels; but the young converts could have had no fellowship with such persons, and I’m sure neither would you. Like Saul of Tarsus, you would have gone to the *disciples* and been received to their fellowship as he was (see Acts ix. 26-28). You see your path would have been plain then. It is very different now. Numerous sects are spread over the face of the earth; the Church and the world are mixed up together; and when God’s new-born babes open their eyes, it is not to look upon the Church as it was in the beginning, but sect after sect named after their founder, their creed, or their country, and all contending for the mastery—who’ll be the greatest.

What is to be done? That’s the point; and we must fairly face it. Here in—— you have most of the leading sects represented, and you wish to know which of them you ought to join. Well, the simplest answer to your question is, “*Which of them is according to the Word of God?*”



*Which of them answers to the pattern given in the Book."*

Let us test them and see. The *leading* Churches are *far* from the mark. They allow the unconverted to sit at the Lord's Table—there can be no doubt about that. If you question this, just go up to some of them and ask the plain and legitimate question, "Is your soul saved?" and you'll see. They choose their own ministers, some of whom are unconverted beyond all doubt. They have one man set up, who acts as evangelist, pastor, and teacher, and for this he receives a stated salary—in short, is "hired" to do the people's religion. He says all the prayers, gives out all the hymns, and does all the preaching. No matter who else may be called of God to speak or pray while they are at "public worship," they dare not do it, else they would be turned out. The Holy Ghost *must* act through "the minister," or not at all; and all that honour is conferred upon him because he is an "ordained man"—that is, because the hands of some other of his fellow-ministers were once laid upon his head, in imitation of the Apostles—which most honest men now see to be a sham. These are serious obstacles to any one whose desire is to please God and obey His Word, "joining" or having Church Fellowship in such places. Are they not? Then there are others who make "water baptism" the door of admission into

the Church, and have no room for the Spirit's guidance in worship or the exercise of all God's gifts in ministry. This is sectarian, and apart from the Word of God. Others gather on "the ground of the one body," and exclude many of God's people who are walking in the truth. This is highly sectarian, and strongly condemned in the Word of God (see John iii. 10). What, then, is to be done? Where can we go? Must we, out of many evils "choose the least"? Certainly not. We must have the right thing, the God-appointed Church Fellowship and order, or none. Surely nothing less will satisfy a true-hearted saint who wants to do the will of God in this matter.

Well, then, find out if there are any believers gathering in the name of the Lord Jesus and having Him in their midst, according to Matt. xviii. 20, who have left all sects and parties, with their names, creeds, and traditions, because contrary to Scripture, and who have returned to the *first* principles of the Church of God; who have no name but that of *Christ*; who are gathered according to the Divine pattern; who have room for the exercise of all His gifts, liberty for all the operations of His Spirit, and have His Word alone for their creed. This is what is commanded in the Book, this is what we see was practised in the early churches, and *this is your place*. *Shrink not from taking it, and, when you have taken it, "continue steadfastly"*

*in it—hold it fast.* Those so gathering may be but a “little flock,” poor and despised compared with the crowd of religious professors around them ; but Jesus says : “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, *there* am *I* in the midst ;” and surely it is better to be where *He* is than in the crowd without Him.

Let those who thus gather make no pretensions to be “*the* people of God,” for this they are *not*, so long as there are saints in the sects around them, who, nevertheless, are dear to God, and will be in the same Heaven for all eternity. Let us love such, as brethren who are one with us in Christ, although the systems they are mixed up in we must ignore. And, having gained the right *position* in Church Fellowship, let us live in the right *condition* in Fellowship with God, and so *walk* among men as to commend the truth to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. May He help us *individually* so to do. Amen.

# CHRIST THE CENTRE;

OR,

“GATHER MY SAINTS TOGETHER UNTO ME.”

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S AINTS of God ; why thus divided ?  
Christ is not divided so ;  
Surely all should be together  
Who the same Redeemer know.  
By the same blood-shedding purchased,  
Destined to the same bright home,  
Why on earth divided ? Jesus  
Bids you all together come,

Saints of God ; break down the barriers  
Man has reared on every side,  
Make a *living Lord* the Centre—  
Him who once was Crucified ;  
Let not names and parties longer  
Separate the “Flock of God ;”  
Jesus died *in one* to gather  
All the scattered Saints abroad.

Saints of God ; a *living union*  
Flows but from the *Living Head* :  
Some are ever busy making  
*Union in the flesh* instead.  
Such a union Scripture knows not,  
Such, its pages all disown ;  
Gathers in the Name of Jesus,  
Christ exalt as Lord *alone*.

Saints of God ; retain no longer  
Names that you must lose ere long ;  
Earthly names gain no admittance  
'Mid the radiant, heavenly throng.  
“Here on earth, Lord, as in Heaven,  
Let thy blessed will be done”—  
So we pray ; but, Oh ! remember,  
All the saints in Heaven *are one*.

Saints of God ; no more divided  
Search the Word—the Word is true ;  
Let it speak in all its power ;  
Listen ; as it speaks *to you !*  
“Come out” from all man’s divisions,  
“Separate” from parties all,  
“Gather unto Him,” with others,  
With thy heart upon Him call.

The Footsteps

OF

The Flock

# THE FOOTSTEPS

. . . OF . . .

## THE FLOCK.

---

WE have been meeting in this place for many nights, to speak and hear the blessed Gospel message. Of this we never seem to tire; for, as we sing: "*'Tis old, yet ever new.*" But blessed as the Gospel is, it is only a part of our heritage. It is God's grand message to the sinner, and, while he remains outside God's Kingdom, he cannot get beyond it. But to those who believe the Gospel, and by faith become the children of God, the whole range of family privileges and possessions belong. I rejoice to believe that there are not a few here among us this evening, who have thus welcomed the Gospel and been born of God. They are rejoicing in Christ and His salvation, and, having known Him as their SAVIOUR, they are now proving His care as their *Shepherd*, and seeking to own Him as their *Lord*. I would seek especially to address myself to such, with a desire to help

them on in their happy, Heavenward way. And first of all, I would seek to impress upon your hearts, my dear young friends, two great and blessed facts—namely, (1) that you have *in Christ* a personal and loving Shepherd, living in Heaven now, for the purpose of guiding you along the path; and (2) that in *the Word of God* you have the path plainly and clearly marked out along which he leads, and in which you are to follow. Amid the many changing, withering things of time, these abide the same. Time works no change in Jesus, for concerning Him it is written: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever” (Heb. xxiii., 8). And of the Word it is written: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word *shall not* pass away” (Matt. xxiv., 35); “The Word of the Lord abideth *for ever*” (1 Pet. i., 25). There will never come a day of your Christian life, on which Christ will absent Himself from you, for His Word is pledged to all His loved ones: “Lo, I am with you *all the days*, even unto the end” (Matt. xxviii., 20, R.V.). Nor is there a step of your heavenward path unprovided for in the pages of the written Word. The “plain path” is there, with guidance for every stage of the journey, counsel for every emergency, and help in every perplexity. To Christ and the Word, then, let your souls cleave. In all your difficulties and exercises of soul, to these turn for aid. They will never disappoint you. If



you will open your Bibles at the first chapter of the Song of Solomon—which, by the way, is a Book of communings between the saint and the Saviour, the Shepherd and the sheep, the Bridegroom and the Bride—you will find in verse ten, the question of one who wants to be instructed and shown the Lord's way. I call it

### A Young Convert's Question.

The words are "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon; for, why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" Here is one in perplexity: not knowing the way. To whom does she turn? To Christ! To the One whom her soul loveth. Who else can answer the question, or point out the way? The soul that has learned to say in truth: "The Lord is *my* Shepherd" will instinctively turn to Him in every difficulty, and seek His counsel in every perplexity. This is the distinctive mark of true Christianity: it centres in a Person. It is not a code of rules, or a dry system of bare-bones theology. This satisfies the world; the dead sinner needs no more; but Christ Himself, His company, and His countenance, are necessary to the believer. This is what sends this inquiring one to Him. It is not for salvation; she has got that already. It is for communion. She wants to know where

He feeds His flock ; where the sheep rest under the Shepherd's care ; and she refuses to turn aside by the "flocks" of His companions. This is a question that will sooner or later crop up in the mind of every young believer who is seeking to own Christ's lordship, and to be guided by His Word. He will want to know where Christ's flock is, in order that he may be found amongst those who own His Shepherd care. Mark the question : it is not where the sheep are—but where the Shepherd is. The sheep may wander ; not so the Shepherd. The word "flock" expresses fellowship ; it describes the saints as "gathered together," and is often so used in the Word. Read, at your leisure, Psa. lxxvii., 20 ; Psa. lxxviii., 52 ; Acts xx., 28 ; 1 Peter v., 2-3. The desire of this seeker is to find *where* they are *so* gathered, in order that she may be amongst them. Some of you are exercised, I understand, about the same subject. You want to know the truth about

### **The Fellowship of Saints.**

In other words, with *whom* and *where* you ought to be in Church fellowship. It is an important inquiry, and your decision will leave a lasting impression for good or evil on your after-life. How needful, then, to make sure you do not err, or choose your own way, or to be led astray by others. You may depend upon it, many will be

anxious enough to have you, now that you have been converted, although they had no interest in you when you were on your way to the pit. But if you are listening to the Shepherd's voice, you will not be lured by the voice of the stranger. You will not be turned aside to the "flocks" of His companions. They, too, have their "flocks," but they are not Christ's. A "sect" is not His "flock," even if some of His sheep are there. A "denomination," gathered around and presided over by some good Christian man, who may be a "companion" of the Lord, is not that of which He speaks in Matt. xviii., 20, where He says—"Where two or three are gathered together in *My Name*, there am I *in the midst*." To gather in the name of the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Presbyterian, Independent or Baptist, is clearly not to gather in His peerless Name. To be known among men as Lutheran Calvinist, or Wesleyan—names of men who, as companions of the Lord, did noble service for His cause on earth—is dishonouring to that only worthy Name, and assists the enemy in perpetuating the barriers that keep the true sheep apart from each other. I remember well when, as a young convert, these things greatly perplexed me. I saw good men in false positions. I saw Christians divided, some going one way on the Lord's Day, some another; some adhering to one form of Church government, some to

another, and each claiming for the system of his choice that it was "according to Scripture." I asked myself "Can this be what God has commanded? Is this what Jesus prayed for 'that all may be one?' or what He meant when He said, 'they shall hear My voice, and they shall become *one* flock, *one* Shepherd?'" (John x., 16, R.V.). Surely not: the Lord is not the author of such confusion. He forbids divisions (1 Cor. i. 10) among His people. It is such a relief to the soul to turn away from the many voices, and the jarring sounds of earth, to listen to the voice of the Lord Himself. We may rest assured that if we go to Him in our perplexities, with a simple and honest desire to know His mind and receive His counsel, we shall never be disappointed. His own promise is: "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way (Psa. xxv., 9). This is an all-important lesson for the young believer to learn. To enquire at the Lord concerning matters that we have our minds made up about is dishonest. To pray, "Shew *me* Thy ways, O Lord, teach me *Thy* paths" (Psa. xxv., 4), when we want to have our own ways, and, when we have already chosen the path that we want to tread, is sheer hypocrisy. Yet, alas, it is no uncommon practice among those who call themselves the disciples of Christ, and the sheep of His pasture. Need we wonder if the Lord deals with such as He did

with Saul, the self-willed and disobedient king of Israel, of whom it is written that he "enquired of the Lord," but "the Lord answered him not" (1 Sam. xxviii. 6). But to the earnest, loving petition of this simple soul, the Lord at once replies, and that reply is plain and definite.

### **He does not chide.**

"If thou know not, O thou fairest among women. He does not chide her ignorance. He knows she has only begun to learn His truth. He does not expect the young convert to know everything. He welcomes the first exercises of heart toward His ways, and leads on in the truth, as the soul is able to follow. His under-shepherds should remember this, and not attempt to over-drive the flock, or hurry the lambs thereof on in paths that they little understand, or have strength to tread. The "feeding" and the "leading" of the flock must never be severed. It is of great importance for us to observe that "feeding" always precedes "leading" in the Lord's order of things (see Psa. xxii. 23; Psa. lxxvii. 12). The soul must be fed in order to follow; it must first be able to say, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;" and next, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." Then there is another point in connection with the Lord's way of guiding His people, and that is, He only shews them

### One Step at a Time.

To this inquirer He says: "Go thy way forth." There is no lengthened description or definition of the path, or where it may lead to; simply, "Go thy way forth." This reminds us of the Lord's call to Abraham of old, when he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees. The word to him was, "Get thee out . . . unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. xii. 1-2), "Out" from country, kindred, and father's house first; "I will shew thee" next. "Cease to do evil: learn to do well" (Isa. i. 16-17), is the Lord's order of things. "Come *out* from among them, and be yet separate," is the Lord's call. "I will receive you [*in*]," His sure promise (2 Cor. vi. 17). The lesson in this is, that the believer must follow the light given him from God, in order to get more. If you are in association with unbelievers, you need not expect that God will shew you truths concerning your fellowship with saints, until you "come out from them and be separate." Some say they do not see this, that, and the other truth. They do not understand about ministry, or fellowship, or rule. Of course not. How could they, where they are? They must take the steps they do understand first. They must follow the light that God has already given, then they will get more. The word is "Go thy way forth." Are

you prepared to do this, dear young saints? It is not a popular thing to do: the very opposite. You may be prepared for the opposition of the world, especially the religious part of it. It will tolerate anything but this. So long as a Christian remains within the circle of the world's religion, he may say many severe things, and yet be caressed; but let him obey the Lord's call to "Go forth," and immediately, then, the bullets of his former friends will be hurled at him, thick and fast.

### **The Footsteps of the Flock.**

But, the questions may be asked: "*What* am I to do? *Where* am I to go? *With* whom am I to be associated?" The Lord's answer to this is: "*By the footsteps of the flock.*" Here is the plain path, the good old way in which those who walk find rest and refreshing. Where are these "footsteps" to be found? In the Word of God—only there! Creeds and Confessions do not tell what these footsteps are. They are humanly devised, and they contain error and tradition, mixed up with truth. We go further back than the Westminster Confession; further back than the Council of Trent; to higher authority than Church courts, or even the Pontiff who sits in the Vatican at Rome—right away back to "God and the Word of His Grace." The Book is the final appeal, and the

supreme authority, in things Divine and Spiritual. Whatever changes time has wrought, it has wrought no change in the thoughts of God. It has altered nothing in the Divine programme. It has rendered nothing obsolete in the paths marked out by God for His people to tread. What God said then to His people, He says still. What He commanded in the Church's early day, He commands still. There is not a jot or tittle altered, nothing to be added, because all is there; nothing to be taken away, because there is nothing superfluous. This makes it a very simple matter to find "the footsteps of the flock." We have only to go to the Word, and there find where and how the flock walked in early days before tradition and sectarianism divided and scattered the sheep. The footsteps are all there—"the Apostles' doctrine, the baptism, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts ii. 41-44). The owning of Christ's Lordship, the Spirit's guidance, and the authority of the Word, in worship and service. In short, the Divine path is there in all its plainness. The wonder is that any simple soul should miss it. There is no obscurity, no difficulty in the Lord's commandment. But our greatest difficulty when these things begin to exercise us is, to get rid of old traditions which some of us have learned long years ago, but not from God. The Lord's commandments are read through the coloured



spectacles of these traditions and thereby lose their Divine simplicity to those who so read them. To how many of the Lord's own people the simple, untranslated word "baptise" means the sprinkling of a babe with water, and thus they dispose of it, or pass it by. The word "a minister" is understood to mean a clergyman. To "break bread" to take the yearly or semi-yearly or monthly sacrament. Whereas the Scripture knows nothing, and says nothing of these things at all. They are innovations of men, and in every case opposed to the Word of the Lord. They are bypaths lying alongside "the footsteps of the flock" to tempt away the lambs and sheep from the place of His rest, where He feeds and rules His obedient ones. I do not now stay to expound these things: read them for yourselves, meditate upon them, and obey them. As you read, and see and learn these "ways that be in Christ," go forth by them. Put down your foot firmly and fearlessly in them, and go forward humbly and trustfully, counting upon God to sustain you in them. You will find others walking in the footsteps before you, who have been led there by the same Word. As one said who suffered much for the truth's sake: "I went forth at the Lord's call, without the camp, unto Himself (Heb. xiii. 12-13), and when I reached Him, I found that others had got there before me." Thus the fellowship of saints in "truth and

love" is formed, and by these it is sustained. And the last word is both comforting and cheering: "And feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents." Here the Lord's care for the little ones shines forth.

### **The Shepherd's Tents.**

The question has oftentimes arisen in the minds of saints thus exercised as to following in the Lord's ways: "Who will minister to us in the things of God?" In the absence of a humanly appointed ministry, is there to be no ministry at all? Yea, verily. The Risen Head of the Church continues to supply the ministers of His Word, as He did aforetime. Those who look to Him shall never lack. There will be evangelists, and pastors too, found in these footsteps. The Gospel will go forth in power, sinners will be converted, and lambs will gambol amongst the green pastures. Under-shepherds, labouring unweariedly, watching and tending the flock, will also be there, and the saints, obedient to the Lord's command, will know and own them, and esteem them highly in love for their work's sake. This, then, is the path, and these the footsteps of the flock of God. There is no other path marked out by God for His people. The Divine order of the Church and the fellowship of saints is found there, and happy is the man who can say

from his heart concerning it: "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning *all* things to be right, and I *hate* every false way" (Psa. cxix. 128). Man has devised his own order of things, and so there is in the world many churches, and many opposing forms of doctrine and practice. But the Lord's way, although irksome to the flesh, is the path of blessing. As it is written: "Thy paths drop fatness" (Psa. xlv. 11). Are you prepared then, dear saints of God, to go forth, committing yourself to the shepherd-care of the Great Shepherd; walking in these paths? You need not fear—His grace is sufficient. To those who walk in these footsteps will meet much to test their faithfulness to the truth is sure, for the bye-paths are many, and the snares of the enemy lie thick on every side. There will be much to learn, and, it may be, others walking there, with whom you will have to bear and forbear. A right state of soul, and an individual walk with God are indispensable conditions for the fulfilment of all this. To walk in the truth we must walk with God, else we shall utterly fall. May the Lord, the Great Shepherd of His flock, be honoured, and we ourselves blessed, by a humble yet uncompromising walk in these good old paths. Amen.

# The Church and The World.

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“Be not conformed to this World.”

*Rom. 12 : 2.*

“The friendship of the World is enmity with God.”

*Jas. 4 : 4.*

---

O, Church of God, redeemed by precious blood,

*1 Pet. 1 : 18-19 ; Eph. 5 : 25-27 ; Eph. 3 : 10.*

Break this alliance, glorify your God !

*1 Cor. 6 : 20 ; 2 Cor. 6 : 14-18 ; Eph. 3 : 21.*

Forsake the Christless World that lures to ill,

*Rom. 12 : 2 ; Heb. 13 : 13 ; Rev. 18 : 4.*

Thou mayest be blessed and prove a blessing still.

*Gen. 12 : 2 ; Psa. 128 : 5 ; Eph. 1 : 3.*

Away with ease and dalliance and play.

*Isa. 32 : 9 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 7 ; Rom. 13 : 11.*

The Great Commission now in haste obey.

*Mark 16 : 15 ; John 17 : 18 ; 2 Tim. 4 : 1, 2.*

In holiness and zeal thou canst excel,

*1 Pet. 1 : 15, 16 ; Rev. 3 : 19 ; Gal. 4 : 13.*

And save the perishing from sin and hell.

*Luke 14 : 23 ; Jas. 5 : 19, 20 ; Jude 22, 23.*

Gird on thy robes with purity impearled.

*Rev. 7 : 14 ; Rev. 16 : 15 ; Rev. 19 : 8.*

And keep thyself “unspotted from the World.”

*Jas. 1 : 27 ; John 3 : 3 ; 1 Tim. 5 : 22.*

Humbled in dust and ashes sin no more.

*Isa. 60 : 1 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 34 ; John 5 : 14.*

Repent while Christ stands knocking at the door.

*Rev. 3 : 20 ; Jas. 5 : 9 ; Rev. 2 : 16.*

O, let thy heart be true to Him alone.

*Jas. 4 : 4 ; 1 John 2 : 15, 16 ; John 21 : 15.*

For lo, the Heavenly Bridegroom cometh soon.

*Matt. 25 : 6 ; Rev. 3 : 11 ; Rev. 22 : 20.*

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