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# A Talk By The Way

H. McKerlie

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# A TALK BY THE WAY

H. MCKERLIE

"If ye abide in my word,  
then are ye my disciples,  
and ye shall know the truth,  
and the truth shall make you free."

JESUS

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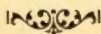
# A Talk by the Way

*H. McKerlie*

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## INTRODUCTION

Two Christian men, sincere disciples of Jesus, were brought together in business transactions. They rejoiced in their mutual love for their Lord, but in a short time learned that, on several important Scriptural subjects their views were very different; on some, they were even opposed to each other. After about three years growing acquaintance one of them, whom we shall call Mr. Q., called upon the other, whom we shall speak of as Mr. A., and a long conversation took place.

After several hours of earnest discussion, Mr. Q. remarked: "I have been a Christian for forty-two years and have never heard these explanations before. I know there are many like me. Will you print what you have told me, so that others may learn the truth? To think that I could not see these things before—might never have known them, but for this talk with you! Do print them; I'd do much to give others this information."

Thus urged, Mr. A. promised to write out and print the gist of that day's conversation. He knows that there is nothing new in what he said, is well aware that multitudes have believed what he believes, and that all he advocates is as old as Christianity itself. A long experience has also acquainted him with the wide and urgent need for the dissemination of the truths referred to by his brother in Christ. So, with the earnest prayer that it may get into the hands of honest inquirers, this little pamphlet is humbly sent forth on its mission of brotherly love.

## I. CHRISTIAN UNITY.

**MR. A.:** I heard about your address on "Unity." It seems you made a good impression. I suppose Christians should all be one! What would you say was the first thing necessary to bring that about?

**MR. A.:** It seems to me, the first essential to the unity that Christ prayed for (John 17) is a rediscovery of the will of God. In the churches of our day there is needed something very like what took place in Israel after the return from captivity. What a picture that was—Ezra and the priests standing upon the platform with the Book of the Law in the sight of all the people! And then, we are told: "*They read in the book the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading;*" (Nehemiah 8: 1-8). Yes! That is the first essential to unity, or to any worthwhile revival of Christianity. There is no reason to expect any improvement in Christendom until ministers take the New Testament, read it distinctly, give the sense, and cause the people to understand the reading.

**MR. Q.:** I think you're right. But you said that was the first, what is the next essential?

**MR. A.:** As humble acceptance of that which is read in the New Testament as that which was accorded the Law when it was read by Ezra. And the third essential to revival and unity is the unquestioning obedience to, and practice of, what is written in the Christian's book of the law of Christ.

Those returned exiles stand forever to shame the pride and carping critical obstinacy of disputing sectaries. Weeping in contrition, hastening to obey the will of God as soon as ever it was read to them, the returned Jews manifested that spirit which delights God and brings joyous blessings to man. It would be well for us and the cause of Christ if all who read, or hear, the Word of God followed their example as far as that is required of us.

## II. WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

MR. Q.: Now, what about this great question: "*What must I do to be saved?*" For over forty years one answer has satisfied me—"*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*". In a former talk with you it seemed as if you did not think that answer is sufficient. But it was the Apostle Paul's answer, and it's good enough for me.

MR. A.: Dear brother, if that is sufficient answer to your great question, why didn't Paul stop there? But you know he and Silas went on. Why don't you? Anyone wanting to give the Apostles' answer to the question should answer it as the Apostles did. If that were always done, the same results would be seen. But when *your* answer is given, the converts do not do as the jailer of Philippi and his household did—Do they?

MR. Q.: You mean they are not baptized?

MR. A.: Yes, that is what is short. And the convert is not to blame. Your answer says nothing about baptism. But in answering that anxious soul, Paul said enough at first to arrest his attention; then, Luke tells us, the Apostles "*spake unto him the word of the Lord*" (Acts 16: 32).

MR. Q.: And it must have been in "*the word of the Lord*" that these people learned they had to be baptized!

MR. A.: That seems to be a necessary inference. Now, Brother, is it right to leave out any part of the "*word of the Lord*" when answering that most important of all serious questions?

MR. Q.: But the question is "*What must I do to be Saved?*" and baptism has nothing to do with salvation.

MR. A.: The Scriptures do not agree with you on that point. They associate baptism with salvation very closely.

MR. Q.: Of course the Bible teaches that believers ought to be baptized, but not for their salvation. John three and sixteen is the whole gospel—"*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Nothing more is needed than belief.

MR. A.: Then the "devils" will be all right, for the Scripture says: "*The devils (demons) also*

believe;" (James 2: 19). But I notice the Scriptures add "*and tremble.*" If belief is all that is necessary to salvation, why do they tremble"? No, Brother, in spite of what you have said, I feel sure you do not think those "devils" are, or will be, saved! But tell me this: Will any sinner be saved without repenting?

MR. Q.: Oh, no. A sinner must repent.

MR. A.: But John, three-and-sixteen does not mention repentance. Neither does Paul's statement: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*"; yet you say all that is required is in either of these brief Scriptures. Now consider, where do you learn that a sinner must repent?

MR. Q.: From other Scriptures.

MR. A.: Exactly! And that is where and how we learn that believers who repent have also to be baptized.

Let us give a little attention to what is probably the most important principle in the study of the New Testament, a principle by which the truth on any subject is gathered from every Scripture dealing with the subject under investigation.

### III. PRINCIPLE AND METHOD OF STUDY

MR. A.: That there is a great need for the recognition and common acceptance of some proper principle and method of Bible study must be apparent to all who consider the many varied and often conflicting opinions expressed on the same subject by different "authorities" on the Scriptures. Were six persons asked: "*What must I do to be saved?*" it is possible that six different answers would be given. Each person might also quote Scripture in support of his answer. Yet it is quite possible that not one answer, nor all six answers put together, would be correct. There is no question whatever about the sincerity and honest piety of such persons. It is their method, or lack of method, in studying the Bible that is wrong and so leads them to different conclusions.

MR. Q.: That is what has lately troubled me much. I have come to think there must be something wrong somewhere, when men whose love for the Lord cannot be doubted disagree so widely on many things their Lord has said or authorized. If there is any way by which students can be led to see alike, I wish to know about it.

MR. A.: In Psalm 109: 160. Revised Version, occurs this significant sentence: "*The sum of Thy word is truth*". There we have the principle for profitable Bible Study. "*The Sum*"—the Total—"of *Thy word is truth*".

We are all familiar with the saying that "a half-truth is often a whole lie". And in quoting the Scriptures many "*half truths*" are used, to the confusion of thinking believers and dividing of the people of God. Were the "*sum*", that is, the *whole*, of the information on any one subject mentioned in the Word found and accepted, we would then, and only then, have the "*truth*" on that subject. You see, Brother, if a subject is mentioned in ten passages, and even as many as nine of these are consulted, the honest conclusion drawn from them might be very far from right; because the tenth passage might contain some important additional information, or some serious qualification or modification of some or all of the other nine. The "*Sum*" of the Word is truth. No Scripture is so trivial as to warrant the neglect or inattention of any student of the Bible.

MR. Q.: That is very interesting and is certainly most reasonable. Since all the Word is God's none of it can be unimportant. How would one go about it—to get the "*Sum*", or total, of the teaching on a subject?

MR. A.: Let me show you the method I was instructed in by an honoured, highly qualified teacher of the Bible. It is very simple and amazingly effective when faithfully followed. It is frequently called the "*Inductive Method*," by which the student reasons from specific cases to a general. This can be easily understood from a simple study to illustrate its application and result.

Suppose we wished to learn what was written over the cross on which Jesus was crucified—there are four passages giving information on this subject. Let us consult them one by one. As we do so, we will write them out, and underline whatever is new and additional information in each. Then write out, as in one passage, all that is underlined. That will be the "*Sum*" of God's Word on that subject.

See opposite page



## THE SUPERScription OVER THE CROSS

- Mark XV, 26:*      "The King of the Jews."
- Luke XXIII, 38:*   "This is the King of the Jews."
- Matt. XXVII, 37:*  "This is Jesus the King of the Jews."
- John XIX, 19:*     "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."

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*The Sum: "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."*

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It will be seen that, of the four passages on this subject, no two are exactly alike. It should also be noted that no one of the four writers tells us all that was written over the cross. But, in thus adding the information of the four passages together, we have the complete superscription — *the Truth* concerning what P'late had written.

Application of this principle in this simple method of study will go far to bring about the "*unity of the Spirit*", which we are exhorted to preserve (Eph. iv, 3) and that *oneness* of believers for which the Lord prayed (John 17). We should soon cease to hear the erroneous preaching of "*Only believe*" as the solitary condition on which sinners are saved.

MR. Q.: I would like to see your method of study applied to the Conditions of Salvation in the same way as you treated the Superscription.

MR. A.: Very well, if you will just write them out, we'll look up the Scriptures on the subject. Of course, we all know that the Gospel "*is the power of God unto salvation*" (Rom. 1: 16-17), so our first passage will be taken from the first proclamation of the Gospel; and we'll underline and add together what we learn.

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MR. Q.: But "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*" is true?

MR. A.: Certainly it is *true*. Yet it is not "*THE truth*" about the conditions on which souls are saved. Ontario is Canadian, but it is not Canada. In some respects it is the most important province in the Dominion, but that does not make it The Dominion. No matter how insignificant or unimportant any one of the other provinces may appear in comparison with Ontario, that province is part of Canada and is an *essential* to the present "Dominion of Canada". Belief, or Faith, is part — it may be the most important part — of the conditions of salvation; but it is far from being the only condition on which Christ engages to save a soul.

MR. Q.: I am deeply indebted to you for this information. Never before have I seen the Scriptures handled in this way, nor been presented with their teaching in such a clear, reasonable and understandable manner. According to this the conditions of salvation are four:

1. *Belief*. 2. *Repentance*. 3. *Confession*. 4. *Baptism*. And the confession is not that of one's sins, as is asked by Salvation Army, Methodists, Oxford Groups and others. It is a verbal confession of Jesus as the Son of God and Lord of the penitent convert. It is simply wonderful.

MR. A.: Of course there are many other Scriptures that deal with this subject of Salvation, but all that tell us anything about how the "sinner" becomes a "saint" are in line with those we have consulted and do not contain any additional information. And it ought to be recognized that although all conditions are not mentioned together in any one passage, they are always implied. For instance, when Jesus, in commissioning his apostles to preach

## NEW TESTAMENT CONDITIONS OF SALVATION

*Acts 2:38:* “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins.”

*Acts 8:36—38:* “the eunuch said: See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said: If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

*Rom. 10:9—10:* “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord (R.V.), and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

*Rev. 2:10:* “Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”

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**THE SUM:** *If thou Believest with all thy heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Repent, Confess Jesus as Lord, and Be Baptized in (Gr. into) the Name of Jesus Christ, and are faithful unto death, thou shalt be saved.*

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the gospel to the whole creation, said: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,*" he did not intend that repentance should not be required. In each recorded utterance of Christ and the Apostles we have all that they thought necessary to say to those before them and for the purpose they had in mind. In directing an inquiring motorist from Toronto to Detroit, it is not necessary to mention every town and village between the two big c.t.es. And in one brief statement, the Lord included every other requirement and condition for the enjoyment of Eternal Life — "*Be ye faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rom. 11: 10).

#### IV. BELIEF

MR. Q.: I cannot but agree with what you have said and shown me; yet I find it difficult to get away from the idea that belief is all that is necessary. Do not the Scriptures say: "*The just shall live by faith,*" (Rom. 1: 17. Gal. 3: 11. Heb. 10: 38).

MR. A.: Yes, that's what the Scriptures say all right. But it is not always properly understood. Notice who live by faith. The Scriptures call them "*the just*" or *righteous*. And no sinner can be just or righteous until saved.

Belief is the acceptance of any statement as true. The statement may be true or it may be false; but whether the one or the other, the *belief* of it is the same.

Belief may be an eager, willing and happy reception of a statement; or it may be the forced, unwilling acceptance of very unpleasant news as true. Belief of the Gospel of Christ is just like belief of any other news.

To those who are anxious to please God, belief is a source of joy and an incentive to right living. To those whose desires are otherwise, it is unwelcome, causing either a stoical indifference or active opposition to the requirements of the Gospel. Hence it saves some and condemns others. There are some who "*believe to the saving of the soul*" (Heb. 10: 39). There are others who believe "*in vain*" (1 Cor. 15: 11). These latter are like the "*devils*" who "*also believe and tremble*" (James 2: 19), except that they have not as sane an appreciation of their terrible position and responsibility and so do not "*tremble*".

MR. Q.: If Belief in the lost and the saved is

the same, what makes the difference to those who have that belief?

MR. A.: That is a good question. The answer that seems most appropriate is that Belief is like the foundation of a house. Without a foundation there cannot be a house. But there can be a foundation without a house. And Belief is to Salvation, very much what the foundation is to the house. Without it the hearer of the Gospel cannot be saved: "*He that believeth not shall be condemned.*"

But Belief, like the foundation, has to be builded upon. It makes salvation *possible*, but does not of itself provide, nor guarantee it. This is made clear by John in the 12th verse of the 1st chapter in his Gospel: "*But as many as received him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name.*"

Please notice—Belief does not *make* believers children of God. But it carries with it "*the right (or authority) TO BECOME children of God.*" Belief is very like a perfectly good cheque on a good bank—it *entitles* the holder to much, but he must use it. It is his right to riches, and these he can have and enjoy—but only if he cashes his cheque. Belief must be used to possess and enjoy salvation.

The reason for this lies in the very nature with which the Creator has endowed the being He made in His own image. Milton, writing of God contemplating the disaster of the first man's sin, gives a terse description of that nature in a sentence accredited to the Creator: "Ingrate that he was. I made him strong enough to stand; yet free to fall." "*Free to fall,*" man is left also *Free to rise*. That liberty is essential to a moral being. It is inherent in human nature. It is man's greatest glory. It is also his gravest responsibility. So that, even though he "*believe on His name,*" Christ saves the sinner only if, and when, that sinner uses his "*right to become a child of God.*"

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## V. BELIEF THAT SAVES.

MR. Q.: Of course there is a great difference between believing with the head and with the heart. No one is saved by "head" religion. The belief that saves must be of the heart. When it is of the heart, belief becomes faith—the faith that saves.

MR. A.: There is no such distinction that I know of in the Scriptures. In fact, all the processes of the intellect, or what is supposed to be the work of "the head", in the New Testament, are attributed to the "heart". Thinking, Understanding, Reasoning, Judging, Deciding, are all spoken of as taking place in the "heart". "*Why THINK ye evil in your hearts?*" (Matt. 9: 4). ". . . lest at any time they should . . . UNDERSTAND with their heart" (Matt. 13: 15). "*Why REASON ye these things in your hearts?*" (Mark 11: 8). "*SETTLE it therefore in your hearts*" (Luke 21: 14). ". . . and hath so DECREED in his heart" (1 Cor. 7: 37). "*Every man as he PURPOSETH in his heart*" (2 Cor. 9: 7).

When the chancellor of Ethiopia asked: "*What doth hinder me to be baptized?*" Philip answered: "*If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest*" (Acts 8: 36-37). It is Believing with *all* the heart that saves; for, in addition to the intellect, the "heart", in Scripture, is the seat of, and includes, the *Emotions*—sorrow, joy, love, hate, anger, desire; the *Moral Nature*; *Conscience*; *Desire*; the *Will*. (John 16: 6, 22; Matt. 22: 37; Acts 2: 37; 15: 9; 1 John 3: 21; Rom. 1: 24; 2 Cor. 9: 7).

The Belief that saves does so because it is allowed, or made, to affect, control and guide aright, all those elements that constitute the "heart", or human "soul". So Peter referred to the conversion of Gentiles as "*God . . . purifying their hearts by faith.*" (Acts 15: 9).

An intelligent understanding and belief of the Gospel stirs the Conscience—"When they heard, they were pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2: 37). That is as far as the Gospel, or any other truth, coerces man. Beyond the awakening of Conscience, Belief does not affect the human "heart" unless the individual wills that it should. From that point, man is responsible for his own destiny.

Having received the Gospel, the believer has to "*work out*" his "*own salvation*" (Phil. 2: 12). That

is done as, and to the extent that, he believes *with all his "heart"*. When his will is made subject to the will of God as that is revealed in the Gospel, the believer does the same as those of whom Paul wrote: "*Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you*" (Rom. 6: 17). The Moral Nature is affected—the heart is purified by faith, and "*with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness*" (Acts 15: 9; Rom. 10: 10). And the affections are transferred to the Saviour; "*We love Him, because He first loved us*" (1 John 4: 19).

It is this kind of belief or faith that changes the whole nature of the convert, and is expressed in a new manner of life—a life lived in harmony with and obedience to the Spirit and commands of Christ. "*The life that I now live in the flesh,*" wrote the regenerated Saul of Tarsus, "*I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*" (Gal. 2: 20).

Philip understood that a person can believe with the intellect and remain unfit for forgiveness and to be joined to Christ and His church. Therefore, when the eunuch asked to be baptized, he said: "*If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest*" (Acts 8: 37); for that, and that only, is the Belief that Saves.

## VI. MAN SAVES HIMSELF.

MR. Q.: According to what you have said, it seems that man has to save himself. I cannot accept that. There are eight Scriptures that speak of "*God our Saviour*", and at least seven in which Jesus Christ is mentioned as Saviour. I believe that Christ saves, and that "*He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through Him.*" (Heb. 7: 25).

MR. A.: I have a friend who fell into the dock from a ladder by which he was boarding a ship. He could not swim and would have drowned had not a man thrown him a rope and pulled him aboard.

It is quite right to say that man saved him. Yet it is also right to say my friend saved himself; for, although the rope was thrown to him and the thrower was waiting to pull him out of the water, he would still have drowned had he not caught and held on to the rope.

Of course that is not Scripture, but it may serve to illustrate what the Scriptures teach. There were

three factors in my friend's rescue: 1. *the saviour*, the man who threw the rope; 2. *the instrument*, the rope by which he was saved; 3. *the means*, the drowning man's gripping the rope and the rescuer's pulling it aboard the ship. In saving a sinner these three factors are present—1. *The Saviour is God (with and in Christ Jesus)*; 2. *The Instrument is the Gospel*; 3. *The Means is Obedience*.

A careful reading of the second chapter of The Acts makes this very apparent. And that man saves himself is a necessary inference from the Apostle's recorded speech.

1. Peter referred to the Saviour: "*God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.*"

2. Peter presented the Instrument—that is, he preached the Gospel, putting salvation within the reach of his hearers by telling them to "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*"

3. Peter told them the Means—"With many other words did he testify and exhort saying, **SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS UNTOWARD GENERATION.**"

## VII. DOES BAPTISM SAVE?

MR. Q.: Do you think that Baptism has anything to do with Salvation.

MR. A.: Yes, I do.

MR. Q.: There I must disagree with you. Baptism cannot save anyone. You and your people believe in Salvation by Works; I believe in Salvation by Faith.

MR. A.: There is a sense in which even "works" seem to have much to do with salvation. A careful reading of James 2: 20-26 ought to convince anyone of that. The Apostle thrice maintains that "*faith without works is dead.*" In the face of that, I wouldn't care to separate work from faith.

MR. Q.: But the sinner is not saved by *doing*, but by believing. The trouble is always that man wants to be *doing* something, wants to save himself instead of allowing Christ to save him.

MR. A.: When a sinner repents, who does the repenting?

MR. Q.: The sinner, of course,



MR. A.: Does he need to repent to be saved?

MR. Q.: Certainly. No sinner can be saved without repenting.

MR. A.: Now, think a moment — is not repenting doing something?

MR. Q.: Well, yes. But that is very different to being baptized.

MR. A.: You are right, it is *very* different. Repenting is done *by* the sinner. Baptism is something done *to* the sinner.

In all you would call "works", the person doing them is *active*. But in baptism, the person concerned is *passive*. It is not the sinner who does the baptizing. It is the baptizer. The penitent candidate is simply submissive. He is not the operator, but the subject of the operation. I said "*operator*"; for, while the preacher baptizes him, God forgives him, so, *being buried with Christ in baptism he is raised with Him through faith in the operation of God* (Col. 2: 12).

That is what I think and the Scriptures are responsible for my belief. A perfectly straightforward answer to the question: "Does Baptism Save?" is written in 1 Peter, 3: 21 — "*Baptism doth also now save us.*"

MR. Q.: But that is only a figure, likening baptism to the flood from which Noah and his family were saved by being in the ark.

MR. A.: The Apostle does not say they were saved by being in the ark, though he refers to that vessel and the fact that they were in it. What he does say is that: ". . . *in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water*" (1 Peter 3: 20). Please notice, Brother, Peter says: "eight souls were saved *by* water."

MR. Q.: But they were in the ark and had they not been there they would have been drowned with all the rest who were outside. The water was what they were saved *from*, the ark was what they were saved *by*.

MR. A.: I am sorry, Brother: From your viewpoint, as far as you can see, you are correct. But I wouldn't like to contradict an Apostle of Jesus Christ just because I couldn't understand something he had said. And I feel sure a little patient examination of the text will change your viewpoint and you'll agree with him.

We all believe, as I am sure Peter also knew, that Noah's party were saved from drowning by being in the ark. That was a salvation of the physical nature—a salvation of their bodies. Peter is not speaking of that. He says: "*eight SOULS were saved by water.*"

The souls of Noah and his relatives were endangered by living amidst the universal sin, the moral corruption which so distressed a loving God that He sent the deluge to wipe it out, and so give the human race a new start in a purer environment. Those eight souls in the ark were saved from the sin that the flood drowned out. The ark saved their bodies from being drowned. The water saved their souls from the sin it quenched.

It is this spiritual salvation of which the Apostle speaks when he refers to the deluge: "*eight souls were saved BY water.*" And as he knew and taught that the penitent sinner is baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2: 38), he saw some analogy in the blessing received in baptism to that brought to Noah by the flood, and so wrote: ". . . *eight souls were saved by water. The like figure, whereunto even BAPTISM DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US.*"

MR. Q.: I can't see how baptism saves. It cannot make a sinner give up his sin. People who are baptized don't seem to love either God or man any more than those who are not baptized.

MR. A.: Baptism is not to make sinners stop sinning. Faith and Repentance do that. Nor is baptism designed to create love for Christ, any more than the marriage ceremony is performed for the purpose of making the newly-weds love each other. But just as the marriage ceremony alters the state of those married, uniting them and creating a new relationship, so baptism, when administered to the proper persons, alters their state from "sinners" to "saints", unites them to Christ, establishes a new relationship. And as the bride is married into the name of her husband, the believer is baptized into the name of Christ, and so becomes a "Christian".

MR. Q.: How can dipping a sinner in water wash away his sins?

MR. A.: I don't think it does. And I do not know any Scripture that teaches that. To those who believed his preaching, the Apostle Peter said: "*Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*" Remission of sins in baptism is

promised to the *believer who repents*. Repentance involves giving up sinning. So it is not to the sinner, but to the penitent believer that baptism, immersing in water, brings Divine forgiveness. And as such an one is baptized *into the Name of Christ, and Into Christ*, he is saved; for *Salvation is in His name, "and in none other is there salvation"* (Acts 4: 12). And *"there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8: 1). Paul has written: *"For as many of you as were baptized INTO Christ did put on Christ."* And this he wrote as his reason for saying: *"Ye are all the sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3: 26-27).

None knew better than the Apostle Paul the correct relationship between baptism and salvation. Like any other intelligent convert, he knew when he was made to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Yet unlike many modern converts, he did not think that that saved him. He was also quite conscious of being sincerely repentant when he exclaimed: *"Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?"* His conversion was different to some of to-day, for he was not told, as they are, *"There is nothing for you to do."* The Lord, who spoke to him, chose that for his salvation the penitent Saul should, like all other inquirers, receive instruction from human lips, and so sent Ananias to tell him what he *"must do."*

In spite of all the preaching of earnest men to the contrary, this chosen Apostle of Christ believed, repented, gave his will and himself to his Lord, and three days after was still in an agony of mind that had prevented him eating and sleeping. Unlike some of our modern teachers, the man of Tarsus evidently did not think that his faith and repentance entitled him to pardon. He seems to have realized that when a man accepts the truth of God and gives up his sin and disobedience to God, he is only doing what he should always have been doing, and that the guilt of each sin of the past stands to condemn until God forgives it. So, though his sight was restored and he was honoured with a special commission from his Lord, the Apostle seems to have remained in evident distress until his instructor said: *"And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name"* (Acts 22: 16). Yes, Brother! Believe it or not, the great Apostle to the Gentiles was three days converted to Christ before his sins were remitted; *and that, he was told, would take place at his baptism.*

## VIII. THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

MR. Q.: According to your teaching, nobody can be saved without being baptized. I don't believe that. The thief on the cross was saved, and he was not baptized. How do you get over that?

MR. A.: Like you, I don't believe that *nobody* can be saved without baptism. I do not *know*, for there is no Scripture that expressly says so, but I *believe*, that immature children, "innocents," or the mentally defective, the morally good and conscientious who have never heard the Gospel, and many who have been wrongly instructed in the Word and therefore have not been immersed according to the Scriptures, are likely to be saved. Of these latter, some have been very near and dear friends of mine. I have no anxiety about their eternal welfare — "*the Judge of all the earth shall do right.*"

I regret the flippant and, more frequently, the dogmatic manner in which some overzealous immersionists unceremoniously condemn all who have not been baptized. I also more deeply regret the deliberate refusal of intelligent religious people to accept the plain, well-known teaching of the Scriptures on this subject of Baptism. But as to the ultimate destiny of all such, we'll do well to leave that to the Great Judge. When each man "*gives account of himself to God*" (Rom. 14: 12), if those who now reject Scriptural Baptism can convince God that they were right in doing so, no doubt they shall be saved.

Our chief concern ought to be about *our* attitude of mind toward these things. If our desire is merely to contend for whatever we believe, because we believe it and have derived comfort and satisfaction from that belief, we are no better than the sectarians that are condemned by Christ's apostles.

"*If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God*" (John 7: 17 R.V.). These words of Jesus reveal the principle on which the final fatal separation is made. Our supreme desire should be to "do his will". When that is so, the promise of the Son of God, is ours, *we shall know* of the teaching, whether it be of God. I believe Jesus meant what He said and fulfils that promise every day. But this is sermonizing — let us

return to your question concerning how the thief on the cross was saved without being baptized.

The "thief on the cross" was a Jew. He died under the Jewish "Law". God had sent John the Baptist to the Jewish nation with a new message and command—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand," and to baptize the penitent. Matthew tells us there "*went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*" Whether the "thief on the cross" was among those baptized, we do not know. Scripture is silent on that particular point. He may have been; but we'll suppose that he was never baptized, that he was saved without baptism. That does not make the Gospel command to be baptized of none effect. The thief on the cross never heard the Gospel. It was not preached until some ten days after Christ had left this earth. He didn't command it to be preached until after He had died and rose again. Baptism, as commanded in the Gospel, is "*into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matt. 28: 19). No one was ever baptized into these names until the Apostles preached the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; and the Spirit came on Pentecost, after Christ had ascended. It was just plainly impossible for the "thief on the cross" or anyone else, to be baptized in an ordinance that did not then exist and for which no command had at that time been given.

But there is another and, to us, a much more important difference between the gracious saving of that penitent thief and the salvation offered in the Gospel.

The mission of Jesus, "in the days of his flesh," was solely to the Jews—as the Israelites were then called. He himself said: "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" (Matt. 15: 24). When He sent out His twelve disciples, He "*commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any cities of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matt. 10: 5-6). When the "seventy" were sent out, the same limit was put on the scope of their mission. This is implied in the directions given them by their Lord in sending them "*into every city and place, whither He Himself would come,*" (Luke 10:

1). While on this mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," Jesus was Himself a missionary—that is—He was the Servant of the Father. Nevertheless, He had great authority. That authority included the Divine right to forgive sins. He wrought a great miracle in proof of his having the ability to pardon. "*That ye may know that the Son of man hath power (Gr. authority) on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,*" (Matt. 9: 6).

Having authority to forgive sins, Jesus could pardon the stricken man at his feet and the thief at his side, on whatever conditions He chose. But let us not forget that authority was exercised only within the scope of His mission—to Israel. That ought to be enough to show there is no parallel whatever between the case of the pardoned thief and us, who are not Jews, but Gentiles.

A still greater difference separates the saving of that thief and the sinner of to-day, even if there was no racial distinction. After Jesus forgave the sins of the individuals mentioned, He died. When He arose from the dead, He did so in a new role, no longer the sent Servant of Jehovah, but a King—"All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth," He said, (Matt. 28: 18). And it is in this universal power, or authority, that He commissioned His Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, concluding with the statement: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that disbelieveth shall be condemned,*" (Mark 16: 16).

It is quite true, as stated in John 3: 16, that God gave His Son to save the world. But before that could be accomplished, Jesus had to give Himself a Ransom for many. Before His death, He pardoned individuals as He would. After His death, the conditions on which forgiveness is extended are fixed.

Those pardoned were forgiven under the operation of the "Old Covenant." God had promised He would make a "New Covenant" (Jer. 31). The word "covenant" embodies two ideas—*contract*, and *will*, or *testament*. The Old Covenant ended with the death of Christ (Col. 2: 14). Referring to the New Covenant, the writer to the Hebrews says: "*For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth,*" (Heb. 9: 16-17).

As long as he is alive, a man can dispose of his possessions as he likes. After his death, his last will and testament governs their distribution. A person may will his wealth to others, to become theirs on their complying with certain conditions which he names in his will. It does not matter what is the relationship, nor the expectations, nor hopes of the heirs, it is the will with its stipulations that decides who shall inherit, what they shall inherit, and how they shall obtain and retain possession of their inheritance. All this is acknowledged without dispute. The right to dispose at will of anything he owns is granted everyone. But when it comes to the Son of God dispensing the salvation He purchased with His own blood, the perishing beneficiaries must have it on *their* terms.

MR. Q.: Well, that's putting it in a way I never saw it before. I wouldn't like to be the one to interfere with any person's will. And I certainly don't want to dispute the conditions on which the Lord Jesus says He will save us.

MR. A.: Suppose a man leaves his estate to someone, and in his will it is stated that the person is to provide for the testator's mother, that he is to make his home in a certain county, take membership in a certain church and employ certain individuals as long as he and they live; how many of these conditions would the beneficiary have to comply with in order to become the owner of the estate and maintain that ownership?

MR. Q.: Why, of course, all of them.

MR. A.: Would complying with the conditions of the will be working for and earning the estate?

MR. Q.: By no means. His benefactor may have worked for and earned it, but whether so or not, at least it is the testator who provides and offers the legacy to the party named in the will.

MR. A.: It is a pleasure to meet one who so readily admits the reasonableness of Christ's commands and sees the need for complying with all the conditions on which He wills Eternal Salvation. The Scripture tells us "*He became the author (cause or occasion) of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him,*" (Heb. 5: 9).

The Gospel is God's New Covenant. It is the last will and testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In it the terms of inheritance are several and variously stated. The Apostles, as divinely

appointed "executors" of that will have fully and clearly set forth its gifts and requirements. We, who are so generously provided for in it, should be delighted to conform to it. And we should show it at least as much respect as we would that of any earthly benefactor—we should keep our hands off the last will and testament of the Son of God.

## IX. UNDERSTANDING OR FAITH?

MR. Q.: Without doubt your exposition and illustration are convincing. Yet, I cannot understand the need for baptism. People are as good, as zealous for God, as anxious to save souls without it, as any of those I know who have been immersed. Can you help me to understand it?

MR. A.: I'm afraid I don't understand it any more than you do. And I'm glad we are not required to *understand* it before we can have it and enjoy what it brings. It is by Faith, not understanding, we are saved. If we fully comprehended everything inherent in God's plan of salvation, there would not be much, if any, opportunity for the exercise of Faith. And even if we had *knowledge* of such matters, that would not necessarily ensure our salvation. Satan *knows*, he *understands*, and *is lost*.

MR. Q.: But will people be deprived of the blessings promised in the Gospel when they do not obey a command because they do not understand the reason for it?

MR. A.: You might provide a good answer to your own question by giving a little consideration to certain incidents in Christ's earthly ministry.

At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, did the servants understand why they had to draw water from the well and fill those great water-pots at the door? Wine was wanted. If Christ could turn water into wine, why didn't He do so, and save so much hard work? What connection had drawing water with providing wine, anyway? Did they understand?

MR. Q.: I don't suppose they did.

MR. A.: When Jesus anointed his sightless eyes with clay and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam, did the man born blind understand why the clay was used? or why he should bathe in the Pool? Did that young man understand the connection



between mud ointment, a cool bath, and receiving sight? And can you imagine the blind youth getting the blessing of sight if he had objected to being smeared with clay and refused to wash in the Pool of Siloam?

MR. Q.: Brother, you've got me there. I wouldn't expect him to be cured if he didn't do as the Great Physician told him.

MR. A.: Jesus had the power to give sight without using clay and a bath. Some miracles, just as important and wonderful as these, He wrought without laying down any preliminary conditions whatever. In these two, He gave opportunity for the Exercise of Faith in Obedience. And it is noteworthy that, wherever commands were issued, the enjoyment of the blessings promised came only and always *after* Obedience. The wisest words that ever fell from human lips were spoken by the mother of our Lord to those servants in Cana of Galilee. We suggest they ought to receive the attention of all hearers of the Gospel who stumble at, and refuse to obey, commands for which they do not understand the reason—"*Whatsoever He saith unto you—do.*"

## X. INFANT OR ADULT BAPTISM

MR. Q.: What do you think of Infant Baptism?

MR. A.: When it was first instituted under the terribly mistaken idea that a child comes into this world damned at birth because of its relationship to Adam, the baptism of infants seemed to all holding that belief to be right, because every Christian then believed that baptism was for remission of sins. No person with a correct comprehension of the Bible's teaching on sin would now contend for what we might call the doctrine of inherited guilt. Certain bodies retain the practice because the people like it. Others continue it because it feeds their churches with members and adherents. No scholar of any denomination would risk his reputation on trying to prove to intelligent Bible readers that the baptism of babies is authorized by Scripture.

Some, with more sentiment than sense, say, "it does no harm". But it does do harm, very grave harm. It is substituted for an ordinance commanded by the Son of God. It deceives those on whom it is practised, by causing them to think they have com-

plied with the Lord's requirements, when they have not done so. And for an educated man, who has read the Bible, and knows the meaning of the words he uses, to take an infant on his arm and sprinkle or pour a little water on it, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I baptize you—" is the absolute extreme of misrepresentation and irreverent presumption. Such a man knows perfectly well that he does not "*baptize*" the child. Like all literary scholars, he knows that the word "baptism" in the New Testament means immersion, that that is its original meaning, is its present meaning and, in those writings, must continue to be its meaning as long as eternity itself.

For centuries after its introduction into the Christian religion, the baptism of infants continued to be an immersion. But even at that it was, as it is to-day, an irreverent presumption. For a man to do "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" what *neither Father, Son, or Holy Ghost ever authorized* him or anyone else to do, is surely the height of presumption and bordering on the blasphemous.

The Dark Ages are past but alas, this is one of their black shadows that modern "Theology" and unscriptural church practice encourages to remain and hinder the spiritual growth of "God's husbandry."

MR. Q.: I quite agree with what you say. It is a pity that the old superstition should still hold so many fine, Godly people in its power! But more and more are coming to see the baptism commanded by Christ is Adult Baptism.

MR. A.: I do not know of any "Adult" baptism in the commands of our Lord. The word "adult" is used by some to denote mature growth; by others it is used in reference to age. It is, therefore, somewhat ambiguous. Besides, it does not have any spiritual quality to relate it to the Lord's ordinance. A much happier term, and one which the Scripture warrants is "Believers' Baptism". That seems in harmony with the words of Jesus: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*"

## XI.—BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

MR. Q.: You have not mentioned the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I think that it is the only baptism that has to do with salvation, and when Paul says there is "one baptism", it is baptism in the Spirit that is meant.

MR. A.: You raise two very important points, for there are many earnest people who have much to say about being baptized in the Holy Ghost; and as the Apostle limits the units of the Christian religion to "one baptism", it ought to be determined just what that one baptism is, for there are some seven mentioned in the New Testament.

1. "THE BAPTISM OF JOHN"—(Mark 11: 30), was administered under the Jewish Law, to Jews only, and is no part of Christianity.

2. THE BAPTISM OF SUFFERING—(Luke 12: 50), endured by our Lord and, in at least some respects, peculiar to Him in its intensity and purpose.

3. JEWISH CEREMONIAL BAPTISMS—(Mark 7: 4, 8; Luke 11: 38), in which passages the Greek words "*baptizo*" and "*baptismos*" are rendered "*wash*" and "*washing*" and refer to the baptizing of parts of the body and household utensils.

4. BAPTISM UNTO MOSES—(1 Cor. 10: 2), in which the Children of Israel committed themselves to his leadership by entering the opening in the Red Sea at his command.

5. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT—(Matt. 3: 11), prophesied by John the Baptist, to be administered by Jesus.

6. BAPTISM IN FIRE—(Matt. 3: 11), also prophesied by John to be administered by Jesus.

7. BAPTISM INTO THE NAMES OF FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT—(Matt. 28: 19), commanded by Jesus to be administered by His apostles, in making disciples through preaching the Gospel.

Of the seven, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Baptism in Fire, and Baptism into the Divine names, belong to the New Covenant. From them, the student has to determine which Paul referred to as the "*one baptism*".

According to the New Testament, Baptism in the Holy Spirit was administered on only two occasions. And on each occasion it was administered for a

special purpose, different to that of the other.

The first baptism in the Spirit was promised to the apostles by their Lord, and was to take place "*not many days*" after He had spoken to them just before His ascension (Acts 1: 5-9). The second chapter of Acts is the historical record of that baptism and its immediate results. Its purpose was to empower the apostles for their world-wide mission, "*by teaching them all things*", "*guiding them into all truth*", "*declaring things to come*", etc. (Luke 24: 46-49; John 14: 16-17, 25; 16: 12-14). In that immersion in the Holy Spirit, the apostles were enabled to speak in several languages, a very necessary equipment for their task of preaching to "all nations". The Baptism in the Spirit also gave them miraculous powers by which they wrought miracles in proof that God was with them and that He endorsed as true the Gospel which they preached. Peter and Mark confirm this (1 Pet. 1: 12; Mark 16: 20).

The second recorded baptism in the Holy Spirit was administered some ten years after the first. The persons baptized were devout Gentiles (Acts 10). And the purpose of the baptism is plainly implied in the narrative, especially in the question put by Peter to the Jewish Christians with him at the time. It was to put the Gentiles on equality with the Jews as entitled to the Gospel and admission into the Church of Christ and to convince the Jews that God so regarded them. This is borne out in Peter's address to the Jewish Christians in justification of his having extended the privileges of the Gospel to people of another nation (Acts 11: 1-18).

MR. Q.: This is all new to me. I was taught that all true Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

MR. A.: If they are, the baptism in the Holy Spirit must have undergone remarkable changes since New Testament times. In those early days, all the people concerned and those surrounding them had *audible* and *visible* evidence of the baptism. In not one instance where the claim is made of having that baptism in modern times is there a vestige of convincing evidence that it has taken place. The "sound as of a mighty rushing wind", the "tongues as of fire", the ability to speak in foreign languages not previously learned, the power to work miracles—all—are remarkably absent. The

excited jabbering of imaginative zealots which is cited as "evidence" of a baptism in the Spirit is well designated "speaking in unknown tongues", and is, in its very nature, a disproof of its own claim. The Apostles spoke in "tongues", but they were not unknown tongues. Of the foreign-speaking element then present in Jerusalem, we read: "*every man heard them speaking in his own language*", (Acts 2: 6, R.V.).

MR. Q.: Why do you say there are only two baptisms in the Holy Spirit spoken of in the New Testament?

MR. A.: The incident recorded in Acts 2 is the fulfilment of the Lord's promise that His apostles would be "*baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence*". Therefore it is correctly called a Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

When Peter was justifying his acceptance of the Gentiles into the church, in referring to the strange happenings that had convinced him they ought to be baptized into the name of Christ, he said: "*the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning*", (Acts 11: 15-16).

The Gospel had been preached for some years, thousands of converts had been made since that great Day of Pentecost when it was first proclaimed, yet the Apostle had to go back to "*the beginning*" to get a parallel to what happened in the home of Cornelius. If the Baptism in the Spirit had been experienced then, as frequently as some claim it is experienced in modern times, Peter would not have spanned ten years to cite a precedent. Nor does it seem reasonable to suppose that, having regarded that Baptism as so very important, the sacred writers would have so completely ignored its recurrence, had it again been administered. These are the only two incidents of the kind mentioned in Scripture. We have no right to assume that there were more.

When the purposes of these Baptisms are duly recognized, it is seen that they are unique, that the causes that made them necessary do not now exist and cannot recur. They were the Spirit's testimony to the truth of the Gospel and to the Divine approval and acceptance of Gentile believers. Jesus said of the Spirit: "*He shall bear witness of me*", (John 14: 26). Having given his testimony and confirmed it by miracle, this Witness is not required longer for that work. We have the record of his testimony.

That the Baptism in the Holy Spirit cannot displace the immersion in water commanded by Christ is made evident by Peter's commanding those who had received the former to submit to the latter (Acts 10: 48).

MR. Q.: I thought I had many arguments for the continuance of Spirit baptism, but one by one they have gone. But tell me where the baptism of fire comes in? Some good people think it is part of the baptism of the Spirit.

MR. A.: No doubt that is on account of the appearance of "tongues like as of fire", at that baptism.

In the New Testament, the only immersion in fire to which human beings are ever likely to be submitted is not pleasant to contemplate. It is reserved for the incorrigible—*"the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolators and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death"*. *"And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire"* (Rev. 21: 8; 20: 15).

This Christian dispensation was instituted by the Baptism into the Holy Spirit. It is to be brought to an end with a Baptism in Fire. In the spirit of prophecy, in which events separated by centuries are brought together, John said of Jesus: *"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in Fire"*.

Peter and Paul are in agreement with the Apostle John about this terrible fate of the wicked which, by implication and inference, we believe to be the fiery baptism spoken of by the Baptist.

Peter says: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up"*. (2 Pet. 3).

Paul writes: *" . . . that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall*

suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed", (II Thes. 1: 6-10).

If those poor, earnest souls realized what it is they would never again be heard praying for a baptism in the Spirit and fire. No one wants to be baptized in the Baptism of Fire.

MR. Q.: That explanation satisfies me. It separates these two baptisms and removes much confusion from my mind: Now, say what you think is the "one baptism" Paul mentions in the fourth of Ephesians?

MR. A.: A careful reading of the first verses in that chapter shows us that the baptism is one of the units in that which the Apostle calls the "*Unity of the Spirit*". As the reader is called upon to "keep" that unity, it seems that Paul thought of that baptism as being within the control of Christians, and expected them to preach and practise it correctly. And the only baptism a Christian is commanded to administer is an immersion of the penitent believer in water in, or into, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is what the Apostle himself styles a "baptism into Christ". The baptism of John, although commanded by God, was not accepted as a substitute for baptism into the name of Christ (Acts 19: 1-5). Neither unquestionable piety, nor even a baptism in the Holy Spirit, rendered that immersion in water unnecessary to him who would join himself to the Saviour (Acts 10). The only one commanded by Christ, the only one put within the control of man to administer in His name, and one for which none other is sufficient substitute, one which a specially chosen and highly favoured Apostle of the Son of God had to undergo for remission of his sins, one without which the most Godly characters described in the New Testament Scriptures could not find admittance into Christ's church, the only one in which the proper candidate is "buried with Christ into death", and from which he is "raised with Christ to walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 2-5), the "*One Baptism*" is that which was practised by the Apostles and authorized by them for all time—the immersion of the believer who has repented, publicly confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and his, /or her, Lord (Matt. 28: 19-20; Acts 2: 38; 8: 38; 10: 48; Rom. 6: 1-6; 10: 10; Col. 2: 11-12).

## XII. MIRACLES AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

MR. Q.: When Jesus sent the Apostles to preach He said: "*These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*"

There are people who claim that these miracles should be seen to-day. That it is only our lack of faith that prevents them. And some others say that they actually are present amongst those who really believe that Jesus Christ meant what He said. I'd like to hear some satisfactory explanation of this remarkable passage and the absence of miracles in the church to-day.

MR. A.: This scripture is a source of worry to many because it is not considered in connection with others. The whole scheme of redemption is one harmonious programme. And in reading about it, if some attention is given to who speaks, who is spoken to, the purpose of the speaker and that of which he speaks, and other like important points in studying the Bible, there is not likely to be any confusion.

In the passage, Jesus is speaking to his Apostles—a definitely known small company, to whom He gives certain commands and makes certain promises. The confusion arises when that fact is lost sight of. The verses are read as if Jesus was speaking to all Christians.

Jesus certainly meant what He said. But He did not say it *to you, nor to me*. He said it to his Apostles. And all that He promised was fulfilled, and is recorded in the very next verse: "*They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*"

The nature of the miracles wrought should be noted. The Lord called them "*signs*". That is a very important designation. It separates the miracles of New Testament times from all the wonders and so-called miracles of succeeding centuries. Whatever



may be thought of as a modern miracle is in no sense like those that accompanied the reception of the Gospel among those to whom Apostles preached. The early miracles were signs, *wrought by the Lord in confirmation of the truth of the Gospel preached by the Apostles of Christ*. The modern "miracles" do not confirm the truth of the Gospel. And there is no need for any such confirmation, since it was given and recorded in Apostolic days.

If we are careful and do not presumptuously appropriate to ourselves commands and promises given by Jesus to His Apostles only, we shall honour Him and save ourselves from many a pitfall.

MR. Q.: That view would seem to take away from us the right to preach the Gospel, yet you encourage many to preach, and do it yourself?

MR. A.: Yes, but I would not quote the command of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature", as authority for doing so.

MR. Q.: Then where would you go for authority for preaching?

MR. A.: The commission given to the Apostles was accompanied by promises of miraculous guidance. And on account of that guidance Jesus took all responsibility for what they would say, and gave them the Divine authority to forgive sins, to admit into the Kingdom of Heaven, and to exclude from it (Matt. 16: 17-19; 18: 18; 28: 19-20; Luke 24: 45-49; John 14: 16-17, 26; 16: 13-15; 1 Pet. 1: 12).

No such authority has ever been given to anyone other than the Apostles of our Lord. As for my authority to preach, I have none. In the history of the early church I can find a precedent and example, but no commission authorizing me or any other person to preach the Gospel. I think it is quite right and proper to follow the example referred to—*"they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8: 4).

But apart from commission, and if there were no recorded example for them to follow, Christians would preach. They cannot do otherwise. Christianity is a *life* (1 John 5: 11), and, like all other kinds of life, it persists by the inherent principles of self-preservation and reproduction. But we are getting very far from the subject of miracles and spiritual gifts.

MR. Q.: Thanks for the digression. The matter of Authority is most important. If all the Lord's

people recognized their own lack of it, and presented only the teachings of the Apostles to whom Christ had given it, the world would be less confused and the church more respected. And now, what about the spiritual gifts of Ephesians four?

MR. A.: In instituting His new religion, Christianity, God not only worked miracles to prove the truth of it, but in a miraculous manner endowed many of its converts with knowledge and teaching ability in order to establish it. The passage you refer to (Ephesians 4: 11-15) shows a list of these necessary gifts. And it also gives clear indication of their duration and purpose.

The miraculous manner of endowment was temporary—*“till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”*

The purpose is as clearly stated—*“that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him, who is the head, even Christ.”*

God created by miracle. He preserves His creation by law. The first is extraordinary and temporary, the latter is permanent and regarded as ordinary. Instituting religion, He has chosen to use the same order. Establishing the Old Covenant, there were the miracles of Israel's deliverance and the wonders of Sinai—temporary and extraordinary; then, until it was finished at Calvary, the Law and the Prophets—permanent and ordinary. Instituting the New Covenant, there were the miracles of Pentecost, the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic ministry—temporary and extraordinary; then, until Christ comes, the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, containing *“the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3. R.V.),—permanent and ordinary. And that nothing beyond these is required may easily be understood from 2 Timothy 3: 16—*“Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”*

MR. Q.: Yet so many must have “tongues, heal-

ings, revelations," and so on. And it wouldn't be so bad if they didn't condemn others as lacking in faith, because they make no pretence of possessing such gifts! When do you think these miraculous spiritual gifts ceased?

MR. A.: With the passing of those converted to Christ during the ministry of the Apostles.

There is a phrase used in connection with the Holy Spirit that it seems justifiable to use in answering your question. In speaking of Jesus, John says that "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him (John 3: 34). "*Spirit by measure*" is an enlightening and significant expression. It explains much in the Scriptures and accounts for the very evident disparity in the spiritual attainments of modern Christians. Different "*measures*" of the Spirit is the fact that accounts for the elimination of the miraculous from Christianity.

To Jesus God gave the Spirit "without measure"—*unlimitedly*. To the Apostles was given a *Baptism*—immersion in—the Spirit. Those upon whom the Apostles laid hands in conveying it received "*the Gift of the Spirit*". This was a less *measure* of the Spirit than that given the Apostles; for, while those receiving it were enabled to work miracles, they could not confer that power on others, as could those who were Baptized in the Spirit. Therefore, when those on whom the Apostles laid hands passed from the earth, the supernatural abilities passed from the church.

The Apostles had proclaimed the revealed will of God. They and others instructed by them had, in the Apostles' lifetime, committed that revelation and its teaching to writing, hence there was no further need of the extraordinary gifts. The purpose for which they had been given was accomplished. Paul, taking farewell of the elders of Ephesus said: "I have not shunned to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God." And as a safeguard against all the erroneous theories that might assail them commended them to God, "*and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*" (Acts 20: 17-32).

MR. Q.: But do not all Christians receive the gift of the Spirit?

MR. A.: Yes. But not in the measure of a "bap-

tism" nor in the measure of the "gift" as given through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, nor for the same purposes. But it is the possession of the Spirit that makes a person a Christian—"If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8: 1-10). By the indwelling Spirit the believer conquers and subdues all the desires of his nature, and by that same Spirit he is to be resurrected to eternal happiness.

There is no more significant reference to the risen Lord than that which describes him as "the *first-born* from the dead" (Col. 1: 18). Others had been raised from the dead before Jesus rose. Why, then, is He styled the "first-born" from the dead? Because birth is the culmination of a process. Life has existed and been developing until it must find expression in a new state of existence and environment, and this it does in the transition we call birth. Apart from Jesus, all who were raised from the dead were raised by the exercise of an external power. Jesus arose in His own power. In Him was something that was not subject to death—"it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2: 24).

Paul tells us just what it was by which Jesus arose conqueror over death and the grave. He also tells us in plain language that it is just that very same power that God is going to use to raise Christ's people: "*If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*" (Rom. 8: 11).

**MR. Q.:** When would you say the believer receives the Spirit? Some say that *believing* is receiving the Spirit or the only thing necessary to receive the Spirit.

**MR. A.:** I think Jesus believed a long time before He received the Spirit. Only after obeying His Father's latest command to Israel and as he came up out of the Jordan, in which He had just been immersed, did the Spirit descend in visible form upon Him, as the Divine Father confessed Him to be His Son (Matt. 3: 13-17).

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were instructing their inquirers in the Gospel, Peter commanded them—"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy

*Spirit*" (Acts 2: 38). The Apostle put the gift of the Spirit *after* baptism, and that corresponds with the time and occasion at which the heavenly "Dove" alighted on Jesus.

Paul evidently associated the gift of the Spirit with baptism, or placed it after baptism. When certain disciples he contacted in Ephesus said they had not heard about the Holy Spirit, the Apostle asked: "*Unto what, then, were ye baptized?*" They answered that they had been baptized in John's baptism. But the Lord's representative would not confer any gift of the Spirit upon them until they "*were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus,*" (Acts 19: 1-6).

The order of the Pentecost conversions was God's order, and it seems to have been the Divine intention that that order was to be permanent, in carrying out Christ's programme for the salvation of the race. Peter's promise of the gift of the Spirit to those who repented and were baptized was completed with the words: "*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,*" (Acts 2: 39).

MR. Q.: That seems to be Scriptural, reasonable and conclusive. But in the case where there is no miracle of tongues, or healing or revelation, how is a convert to know that he has the Spirit and is a child of God?

MR. A.: That is a very good question. And I think Paul supplies a very good answer. He says "*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God*" (Rom. 8: 16).

MR. Q.: How does the Spirit bear witness? Most of the people I know say that they have the witness of the Spirit within themselves—that they *know* they are children of God because the Spirit makes them *feel* they are children of God.

MR. A.: The Spirit bears witness in just the same way as men bear witness, by testifying—"The Spirit speaketh expressly," (1 Tim. 4: 1). He has spoken through Christ's Apostles. Luke tells us that when the Spirit came upon them on the Day of Pentecost, "*they began to speak . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance,*" (Acts 2: 4). It should be remembered that, "*the word of God*" is not only "*the sword of the Spirit,*" (Eph. 6: 17), it is the *testimony*, or *witness*, of the Spirit (Heb. 10: 16-16) and also "*the seed*" of the kingdom (Luke 8: 11).

The Spirit spoke expressly through Christ and through His Apostles—“*they began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2: 4), and they “*preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven*” (1 Pet. 1, 12).

We have already noticed that the Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel, commanded hearers to Believe, to Repent, to Confess Jesus as the Son of God and Lord, to Be Baptized, to Be Faithful unto Death. That is the testimony—the “*witness*” of the Spirit. We know in our own mind and heart whether we have done that which is commanded. When we have, then “*the Spirit witnesseth with our Spirit that we are children of God.*”

MR. Q.: You do certainly make a lot of things much plainer than I ever saw them before. But if I understand you aright, you seem to make out that there are now no witnesses for Christ like the early disciples?

MR. A.: There are now no such witnesses on the earth. Yes, I am aware of the claims of some who think themselves “witnesses” and of many others who claim the Holy Spirit continues to guide and bear witness *in* themselves. But the self-deception of these good folks is revealed in their digressions from what the Spirit has “*expressly*” spoken. I think that we have to admit that the Holy Spirit is wise enough, knows enough, and is honest enough, never to contradict himself.

There is no need whatever for the continuance of the Apostolic manner of witnessing for Christ. In a protracted trial in any Civil Court, the testimony of the witnesses in the case is taken down and committed to writing. The witness can then retire. The case may continue for months or years, the witness is not called to testify again; but his testimony may be consulted daily. The witness may die—it makes no difference—the written testimony remains—no more is required.

The Divinely appointed Witnesses, the Holy Spirit and Christ’s Apostles, have long ago given their testimony. It has been committed to writing. The Faith has been “*once for all* delivered unto the saints.” Our duty is to consult the testimony; our task, to bring every thought into harmony with and subjection to it, and our greatest privilege is to obey it and enjoy its many blessings. Let’s pray for grace and gratitude enough to always do so!

### XIII. ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED

MR. Q.: If I remember right, you indicated that you think a person can be saved and then fall away and be lost, do you really think so?

MR. A.: It does not matter very much what I think. The important thing is, What do the Scriptures teach?

MR. Q.: I would say they teach what, along with many others, I believe, "*Once saved, always saved.*" Isn't that so?

MR. A.: That depends on what is meant by "*saved.*" If "*once saved*" means once we are judged, approved by God, clothed in immortality and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, then we can say "*always saved*"; for it is of such that Paul wrote: "*So shall we ever be with the Lord,*" (1 Thes. 4: 17). A completed salvation is complete for always.

MR. Q.: I don't mean that. What is meant is that having accepted Christ, we are saved, and that forever—our salvation is full and complete.

MR. A.: The Apostle Paul did not think nor teach that. Long after they had accepted the Gospel, he wrote to the saints at Rome: "*now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed,*" (Rom. 13: 11). And in the Hebrew letter, the writer says of Christ that He "*shall appear a second time . . . to them that wait for him, UNTO SALVATION*" (Heb. 9: 28). According to these passages, there is no fully completed salvation until Christ comes.

The fact is, salvation is a three-fold work. 1st. The sinner has to be *SAVED FROM COMMITTING SIN*. That is done when he believes with all his heart; for as we have already seen, "*with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,*" (Rom. 10: 10). 2nd. The repentant sinner has to be *SAVED FROM THE GUILT OF SIN*. Guilt has to be pardoned. Only God can do that. The Gospel promises pardon to the penitent who is "*baptized into the name of Christ for the remission of sins.*" (Acts 2: 38). 3rd. The saint has to be *SAVED FROM THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN*—death—mortality. This is to be wrought at the coming of Christ, 1 Cor. 15: 50-58).

MR. Q.: There is no gainsaying these Scriptural teachings. But these are not all the Scriptures dealing with the subject. Listen to this from the Revised

Version, John 10: 27-39: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*"

Kindly notice what Jesus says: "No one can snatch them out of my hand." Do you believe that?

MR. A.: I have noticed these words for years and I certainly do believe them. What a tremendous and grave responsibility they place upon every Christian. They make the believer entirely responsible for his own salvation.

MR. Q.: You amaze me. They seem to mean the very opposite. They attribute the safe keeping of believers to Christ and to His Father, God.

MR. A.: Yet they do as I say. And they certainly do not mean what you mean by once saved, always saved."

These words are spoken of Christ's "sheep". And His sheep are identified by two marks. They are "ear-marked"—"*they hear my voice*", and they are "foot-marked"—"*they follow me*". Jesus says "I know them". Of course He does. So may anyone know them. They are easily identified by these two marks—they *hear*, they *follow*, the Good Shepherd.

Now, Brother, consider whether this is true; hearing may not always be voluntary, but following Jesus is never anything else. The fact is, Jesus, speaks of a class to which anyone who cares to do so may belong. In His love for their souls, the Good Shepherd calls on all to follow Him. Some hear but do not follow. Others do both. As long as they listen to His voice and follow Him, they belong to that class who cannot be plucked out of His hand. The serious question is not about the Lord's ability to protect and save His followers, but ought to be: *Can a man stop following Christ?* If he can, and does so, that man no longer belongs to those of whom Christ speaks. And if he remains a non-follower, in spite of the fact that he was once saved from his sins, he will be lost.

There is a Scripture that says: "*all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*" (Rev. 21: 8). If that Scripture were understood as some under-



stand John 10: 26-29, there would be no use preaching the Gospel to liars, for none would ever be saved. But sensible preachers keep on preaching to "all liars." Many such have listened, believed and stopped lying. Any liar may stop lying. The term would then not apply to him. He would no longer belong to that class which is to have its part in the lake of fire.

To the tired and tried follower of Jesus, the assurance of safekeeping is a great inspiration to persevering effort. But examination of his own experience will convince anyone who is not deluded that he is free to follow or not to follow as he wills and chooses. However, we'll leave this somewhat philosophic manner of exposition and show that the Scriptures "furnish us with a direct contradiction of the theory of "once saved, always saved."

The Revised Version puts it beyond all doubt that believers not only *may*, but some actually *did*, "fall away" and were lost. The need for continually pressing forward in the Christian life is urged by the warning reference to the terrible state and fate of some who had failed to do so. "*For, as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame*" (Heb. 6: 1-6).

"Enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the word of God and the powers of the future age"—what has the modern Christian got to save him that these early believers did not have? Yet they "*fell away*"—and could not come back again.

The best way to prevent falling away is to keep on going forward. Those converts on Pentecost provide a safe example—"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2: 42).

Neither "Only Believe," nor "Once Saved, Always Saved", finds sanction or support in the teaching of the New Testament. Listen to Paul as he expresses his deepest desire—" . . . if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made

*perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3: 1-13).

Listen to Christ as he dictates a message to a church grown so indolent and indifferent that it is thoroughly distasteful to Him and about to be rejected in disgust—"He that **OVERCOMETH**, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3: 21).

"Only Believe" and "Once Saved, Always Saved", in trying to honour and glorify Christ as Saviour, mistakenly credits Him with doing what He has never promised to do, namely, that which man can do for himself. Whatever is beyond the power of the believer to do, God has engaged to do for him—"God is faithful, who will not suffer ye to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13). Having this assurance, we are left to complete the victory—"even as ye have always obeyed, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 12).

The glory of the Christ is "*He shall save his people FROM their sins*" (Mat. 1: 21). The disastrous nature of these two unscriptural doctrines is that they presume that Jesus may save His people *IN* their sins. They forget that "*if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries . . . The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Heb. 10: 26-31).

**MR. Q.:** Let us pray for faith and courage sufficient to be steadfast, so that we may join with the same writer and say: "*But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul*" (Heb. 10: 39).

NEW TESTAMENT CONVERSIONS

Out of Christ  
COMMANDS OBEYED

In Christ  
BLESSINGS ENJOYED

Acts	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BE BAPTIZED	SINS REMITTED	HOLY SPIRIT	PROTECTION	PARDON	ETERNAL LIFE
II, 38	..	R	..	B. B.	.. R				
VIII, 12	B	..	..	B. B.					
VIII, 37.38	B	..	C	B. B.					
X, 48	..	..	..	B. B.					
XVI, 15	..	..	..	B. B.					
XVI, 31, 33	B	..	..	B. B.					
XVIII, 8	B	..	..	B. B.					
XXII, 16	..	..	..	B. B.	.. W				
					<p><i>"baptized into Christ"</i> GAL. III</p> <p><i>"no condemnation in Christ"</i> ROM. VII</p>	<p><i>"much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit"</i> LK. XI, 13</p>	<p><i>"will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able"</i>. 1. COR. X, 13</p>	<p><i>"If we confess our sins, he is faithful . . . to forgive us our sins"</i> 1. JN. I, 9</p>	<p><i>"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."</i></p> <p>REV. II, 10</p>

**Church Of Christ**

25 East James Street

**SUNDAY**

Hear the

**HERALD OF TRUTH**

WCMB 1460ks 7:30 A. M.

Worship With Us

Bible Study 9:30 A. M.

Communion 10:20 A. M.

Preaching 10:30 A. M.

Even'g Worship 7:30 P. M.

MINISTERS

Paul E. Tustin Dial 3-0880

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