

God's Good News: A Talk to Young People on the Way of Salvation

by Alfred P. Gibbs

Forward

To Young People Everywhere:

This booklet has been prepared especially for you, with the earnest hope and prayer that you will give it your undivided attention and serious consideration. In this pleasure-loving age, characterized by indifference, irresponsibility, and shallow thinking, eternal realities are apt to be crowded into the background, or even deliberately rejected by the majority of people. Many argue that this present life is of far more importance than the future, and thus the temporal has been allowed to obscure the eternal.

I trust, however, that this is not true of you, but that, deep down in your heart, you have given serious thought to the fact of God and of your personal responsibility to Him as your Creator. Perhaps you have already begun to realize that you are a creature, not only of time, but of eternity; and there has been stirred within you a desire to know this God with Whom you must one day have to do. It is to such that this booklet will come as a challenge. May it be yours to meet this challenge by facing the facts contained herein, and come to a right decision regarding this great matter of God's salvation!

There are five chapters, so arranged as to present the gospel in its logical sequence, and it is urged that you read each chapter carefully, with a copy of the Bible open before you. Turn to each Scripture reference given and *read it for yourself*, so that you may know what the word of God actually says. In these references, the book in the Bible is first given, then the chapter in that book, and finally the verse or verses in that chapter. For example, "John 3:16-18" means John's Gospel, chapter three, verses 16 to 18.

Don't rush through this booklet, for the subject is of tremendous and vital importance. Grasp thoroughly the subject of chapter one before proceeding to chapter two and so on, right through to the end.

Should the reading of this booklet lead you to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, and the enjoyment of God's salvation, I shall be pleased to hear from you in care of the publisher.

Praying God's blessing upon you as you read these pages,

I remain,
Your sincere friend,
Alfred P. Gibbs

Chapter One: The Need for God's Salvation or Why Do We Need To Be Saved?

Perhaps someone has asked you the rather pointed question: "Are you saved?" and you did not know how to reply to such a query because you did not know what the questioner had in mind, or what was meant by being "saved." You may have seen the words, "Jesus Saves," on buildings or on signs along the roadway, and have wondered what it was all about. It may be that you have been handed a [gospel] tract in which the words "saved" and "salvation" have occurred quite frequently, and it has puzzled you considerably, because you had but a vague and misty idea about it all. It is with the view of taking the "mist" out of the mystery of this matter of salvation that this booklet has been written.

First of all, let us find out what the words "saved" and "salvation" mean. The word "salvation" means deliverance or rescue from a danger which threatens. For instance, here is a person who falls into a river and cannot swim, and is therefore in danger of death by drowning. All his struggles to save himself are in vain, but someone, who is a good swimmer, sees his peril, dives into the river and saves him from a watery grave. In describing his experience afterwards, the person who had been rescued would speak of it as being "saved from drowning," and refer to his rescuer as his "savior." Thus the word "salvation" at once suggests the thought of both danger and deliverance.

The Bible, which is God's word to us, has much to say about salvation. The words: "Savior," "saved," and "salvation" occur very many times. The "Savior" of course, describes the One who saves. The "saved" are those who have been delivered from their danger; and "salvation" simply describes the whole process from its beginning to the end. The reason the Bible speaks so much about salvation is that all humanity is in peril, and therefore needs to be delivered or saved from that danger. Let us now see, from God's word, what is our danger and why we need to be saved.

First, we need to be saved *because we are all sinners by nature*. That is to say, we were all born into this world with a sinful nature within

us. We could not help this, for we inherited it from our parents and they, in turn, from their parents and so on, right down to Adam and Eve, our first parents. By "nature" we mean what we really *are* in ourselves. We think what we think, say what we say, and do what we do, because *we are what we are*. We speak of a "good-natured person," and by this we mean that his whole life is characterized by kindness, for what is in a person's nature comes out in his life.

Let us illustrate. Here is a little Bengal tiger cub that looks very pretty and is as harmless as a kitten. While young, it is both attractive and playful but, small though it is, it has the blood-thirsty nature of a tiger within it. As it develops into full growth, this fierce nature is evidenced by its actions, and [it] soon becomes the terror of the jungle. In other words, it only required *time* to reveal its true nature or character.

All the crimes committed in this world were done by those who were once little, harmless and very attractive babies. What turned these harmless children into dangerous criminals? The answer is simple: the sinful nature within them was allowed to develop unhindered, and soon showed itself by *sinful thoughts* which were entertained in the mind, *sinful words* that were allowed to escape the lips, *sinful acts* that were committed in the life, and a *sinful attitude* adopted toward God Himself.

In the third chapter of Genesis, God tells us how we came to be possessed of this sinful nature by birth. When Adam, [the first man and] the head of the human race, sinned in the Garden of Eden by deliberately disobeying God's command, he not only sinned for himself, but for *the whole human race* which was to descend from him. Thus Adam dragged all humanity down with him in his fall. Adam passed on to his children, at their birth, the sinful nature he had received through his act of disobedience, and his children passed it on to their children, and so on, through the centuries, until this present time. Thus each of us came into the world possessed of a sinful nature which makes us sinners by nature. To put it more plainly still: We do not have to sin in order to *become* sinners, but we sin *because we are* sinners. Is this clear? This is what Romans 5:12 means when it says: "As by *one man* [Adam], sin came into the world, and death by sin, so death has passed upon *all men*, for *all have sinned*."

Let us illustrate this fact still further. A dog does not bark in order to *become* a dog, but because it *is* a dog. A horse does not neigh in order to *become* a horse, but because it *is* a horse. A person does not have to sin in order to *become* a sinner, but because he *is* a sinner. A dog barks because it is his *nature* to bark; a horse neighs because it is his *nature* to neigh; a person sins because it is his *nature* to sin.

Children do not have to be *taught* to tell lies; to be disobedient to their parents; to lose their tempers; to take things that do not belong to them; to allow wrong thoughts to enter their minds; and to say wrong and angry words. What is in the *root* of their nature will be seen later in the *fruit* of their doings. We know an apple tree by the fruit it bears. It does not have to bear apples in order to *become* an apple tree, but because it *is* an apple tree. What was in the *root* of the tree came out in its *fruit*. It was just as much an apple tree when it was three inches high, with no apples on it, as when it was fifteen feet high, with hundreds of apples on it! So also all of us were born with the *root* of *sin* within us and it only takes time before the *fruit* of *sins*, such as sinful thoughts, words and deeds, is seen in our lives. Read also Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9-10; Isaiah 53:6, and Mark 7:21-23.

Secondly, we need to be saved because, *while we are living under the control of this sinful nature, or "living in the flesh," we cannot please God*. This sinful nature (sometimes called, in the Scriptures, "the flesh") is described as being entirely opposed to God's *word* to us, His *will* for us, and His *ways* with us. By nature all are in a state of enmity to God or rebellion against God, loving what He hates and hating what He loves. Mark what God says: "The carnal mind [the minding of the flesh] is enmity against God, for it is not subject [or obedient] to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, *they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:7-8). What does this mean? Simply this: If you are not yet saved, you have never thought, said, or done one thing that has pleased God during your whole lifetime! A life lived under the control of this sinful nature is a wasted life, so far as God is concerned.

Perhaps the meaning of the word "flesh" is best understood by taking away the last letter and spelling the rest of it backwards. What do we have? "S-E-L-F." Thus while one lives the "self" life, or the "flesh" life, he *cannot* please God. This explains the reason why the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, one of the most religious and moral men of his day: "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Ye *must* be born again" (John 3:1-16). The reason is quite simple.. Nicodemus, though religious and moral, was still "in the flesh" or living the self-life. What he needed was to have *another kind of life* imparted to him, by means of which he could [live to] please God. At our first birth we received a *physical* life, or a *human* nature, which fitted us only for an earthly sphere, in which we could not please God; but the moment a sinner receives Christ as his own personal Savior, God imparts to him a new kind of life, a *spiritual* life by which he is made "a partaker of the *Divine* nature" which fits him for a *spiritual* sphere described as "the Kingdom of God" (Romans 14:17). With this

new possession the believer is enabled to think, say and do things that are pleasing to God. Just as the receiving of physical life, or a human nature, is described as "being born"; so the receiving of this spiritual life, or a divine nature, is called in Scripture, "being born again." See 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:3-4.

This new birth is not the cultivating, or improving of the old corrupt nature called "the flesh," for the flesh cannot be improved or altered. That is why the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus: "That which is born of the *flesh, is flesh.*" What would you think of a man who had the idea he could, by cultivation, produce grapes from a thorn bush, or figs from thistles? Supposing he took a thorn bush and a thistle and, in well fertilized soil and under ideal conditions in his green house, proceeded to cultivate them with a view to producing grapes and figs from them. What would be the result of his experiment? You reply and rightly: "All he would get would be cultivated *thorns* and cultivated *thistles.*" This is what Christ meant when he asked: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matthew 7:16).

The new birth is the impartation, to the believer, of an entirely different nature, a *divine* nature. This nature causes the believer to love and study God's word, to desire to do God's will, and to walk in and be content with God's ways. Thus the believer is said to be no longer "in the flesh" as to the sphere of his life; but to be "in the Spirit," for he is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. See Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.

Now ask yourself seriously: "Have I been truly born again; or am I trying, by my own efforts, my good resolves, my religious exercises, and my good works to please God and thus earn His salvation by my own merits?" Remember, the Lord Jesus said emphatically: "Ye *must* be born again." Whoever you are, whether religious or irreligious, moral or immoral, educated or uneducated, young or old, rich or poor; you *must* be born again for, apart from this new birth, *you cannot please God.*

Thirdly, we need to be saved *because we are sinners by practice.* That is to say, we have deliberately and wilfully chosen to think, say, and do wrong things very many times. Each person reading these words must admit the truth of this statement, if he or she is honest with himself or herself. As you recall the last few days, weeks, and months of your life, you will surely become conscious of the fact that you have sinned in many ways and on many occasions. Every wrong thought you have allowed to remain in your mind, every lie you have told, every act of disobedience you have committed, and every wrong deed you have done has been a sin against God, for all sin is against God.

Perhaps some may be inclined to skip these words because of the unpleasant memories they awaken; but shutting ones eyes to what is true is a very foolish business. It is a good thing to face facts, even though those facts are unpleasant. Many a person has been saved from an early and untimely death because he went to a doctor and submitted himself to a thorough examination which revealed a dreadful disease and, at the same time, gave the doctor the opportunity to prescribe a remedy for its cure. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Physician, and wise is that person who submits to His examination, acknowledges the correctness of His diagnosis, owns himself to be the guilty sinner Christ declares him to be, and then leaves himself in His hands for the cure which He alone can give!

The Bible is like an X-ray which exposes what lies beneath the surface, and, in its pages, we may see ourselves as God has described us. God knows us through and through, and we cannot hide anything from Him. Now read carefully these words from God's book and see what He says, of *all humanity* in general and of *yourself* in particular: "There is *none* righteous, no, *not one*...They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, *not one*...For there is *no difference*, for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-18, 23). This is God's portrait of *all by nature*, yourself included. Is it a true picture? You know, in your heart of hearts, that it is, and that you are a sinner in the sight of a holy, sin-hating God. The fact that you may not have sinned as greatly as some others that you know does not excuse you, for God says: "There is *no difference*, for *all* have sinned." In other words, though all may not have sinned alike, or to the same degree; yet all alike have sinned.

Let us illustrate. Here is a square target with a bull's eye in the center. Standing fifty feet from it are three boys with bows and arrows. Each shoots his arrow at the bull's eye. The first misses the target altogether; the second manages to hit the border of the target, while the third succeeds in getting his arrow about two inches from the bull's eye. Now which of these boys succeeded in hitting the bull's eye? Not one, for they *all* came short of the mark! It is true that one came nearer than the others, but there was really no difference, for *all* came short of the bull's eye. That bull's eye represents the standard of absolute perfection which the holiness of God demands. Listen to His demands as revealed in the law He gave: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Can anyone truthfully say he has perfectly fulfilled *all* these requirements and thus scored a bull's eye? No, indeed. The more we examine ourselves in the

light of the law, the more we shall discover how far short we have come of God's standard of perfection. Now mark these words carefully: any person coming short of these requirements constitutes that person a sinner by practice; for sin is any thought, word, deed, or attitude of heart and mind that displeases God.

Are you prepared to own yourself to be the guilty sinner that God says you are? Are you ready to admit that you have, on countless occasions, thought, said and done wrong things? It is a sign of true wisdom when a person honestly faces the question of his sins and, like the Prodigal Son, confesses: "I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight"; or, with the Publican, cries: "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 15:21; 18:13). Let us not try to cover up our sins or excuse them, or attempt to make light of them, or call them by fancy names, or blame others for them; but let us frankly and honestly face them and own them, remembering that Jesus said: "I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance" (Mark 2:17). "I am come to seek and to save that which was *lost*" (Luke 19:10). Read also Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 14:1-3.

Fourthly, we need to be saved *because God must punish sin*. God is a holy and righteous Being and therefore hates sin in any shape or form, and *must punish it*. He has declared in His word concerning sin: "Do not this abominable thing that I hate!" (Jeremiah 44:4). He tells us also that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). Listen to the solemn sentence: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Just as the law of this land must righteously punish the lawbreaker, so God must visit His judgment upon sin and the sinner, if that sinner dies with his sins unforgiven.

Heaven is the dwelling place of God, and Jesus declared: "If ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins...and whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21, 24). Over the gates of heaven is written: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). No stain of sin shall ever darken heaven. All who enter there must be cleansed from their sins. The Lord Jesus spoke very solemn words concerning those who die in their sins, rejecting Him as their Savior. For such, He said, there was no hope of heaven; but instead, a dreadful place of outer darkness where there is eternal weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Read Mark 9:43-48; Matthew 25:30, 41, 46; Luke 16:19-31.

One does not like to speak of such things, but it was the loving Savior Himself Who warned His hearers of the dreadful fate that awaits those

who neglected, rejected, or despised Him and the salvation He has provided. God does not desire any to be eternally lost, but is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Thus God has faithfully warned us of the awful danger of dying in our sinful condition and being separated from Him for all eternity. Surely this should cause each reader to seriously ask himself the question: "What must *I* do to be saved from the consequences of dying in my sins?" The answer to this question brings us to chapter two of our booklet.

Chapter Two: The Provision of God's Salvation or What Has God Done To Make Our Salvation Possible?

We have already mentioned that God does not desire that any soul shall be eternally lost. Now let us see what God has done to make this salvation from the consequences of our sins possible.

First, God has revealed His love towards all. The Bible tells us that "God is light," therefore He cannot be indifferent to *sin* (1 John 1:5). It also assures us that "God is love," therefore He cannot be indifferent to the *sinner* (1 John 4:8). The Lord Jesus has told us, in unmistakable language, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Though God hates sin and must punish it, He loves the sinner and yearns for his salvation. Let each reader be assured that God loves him or her. God does not love us because we *deserve* His love, but because it is His very nature to love. It is dreadfully possible for a person to die unsaved, unwept, unhonored and unknown; but it is not possible for him to die unloved, for God loves him. He does not love us *because* of what we are, but in *spite* of what we are. Some people think of God as though He was a Tyrant, eager and anxious to punish any breaking of His laws; but the Bible speaks of "the kindness and love of God our Saviour" (Titus 3:4). It reveals Him as being "rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4). God's great heart of love goes out to every poor, lost and guilty sinner, and He wants "all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

Secondly, God has proved His love by sending His Son into the world to be the Savior of all. The measure of God's love for us is seen in the greatness of His gift to us. God's Son, equal and eternal with His Father, did not come into the world in order that God *might* love us, but *because* God loved us. From His bright and beautiful home in heaven above, the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world of sin, darkness, death, doom and despair in order to be the Savior of sinners. In His wonderful grace He clothed Himself with humanity and was born of a virgin in the little town of Bethlehem. He did not have a

sinful nature such as we possess, for we are told He *had* no sin, *knew* no sin, and *did* no sin (Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22). His life was without any stain of sin, either in thought, word, or deed. He was "holy, harmless, and undefiled" (Hebrews 7:26). Only a sinless Savior could save sinful sinners.

Think of the great miracle and mystery of His birth! He, Who was the Creator of all things, became the little babe of Bethlehem! (John 1:1-4, 10). The eternal God became Man, in order that He might bear all our sins, suffer all the punishment due to them and die in our stead. The Savior Himself said: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Again He declared: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Thirdly, *the Lord Jesus Christ, by His finished work on the cross, has made possible the salvation of all who will trust Him as their Savior.* Pay close attention to this, for it is the very heart of the gospel of God's salvation, and it is absolutely necessary to your salvation that this great truth be thoroughly grasped. The Lord Jesus, by the perfect life He lived on earth as Man, by the wonderful words He said, and by the mighty deeds He did, proved Himself to be the eternal Son of God. But He did not merely come to do this, for this, of itself, could not save us. He came to provide a *salvation* for sinners, and this could only be done by the sacrifice of Himself on our behalf.

We have before mentioned that God had declared: "The wages of sin is death," and: "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." God is just and righteous, and therefore cannot ignore sin; it *must* be punished. How then can the sinner be delivered from the just and righteous judgment of God upon his sins? Only in one way, and this was solved by Christ, nineteen hundred years ago, on Calvary's cross.

Upon that cross the sinless Son of God willingly and gladly offered Himself and "bore [all] our sins in His Own body" (1 Peter 2:24). God, Who knew all our sins, placed them upon Him (Isaiah 53:6). What now must happen? Christ must suffer, to the fullest extent, all the punishment due to those sins. As He hung upon that cross, all the fierce wrath of God fell upon Him. All the waves and billows of God's condemnation against our sins were poured out upon the One Who was bearing them. He endured every ounce of that awful sentence due to us and, by His death, *satisfied all God's demands* against sin and the sinner. The Savior thus accomplished, by the sacrifice of Himself, *all the work that is necessary to the salvation of every sinner that will trust in Him.* Have you grasped this tremendous fact? How good it is to be able to say with the poet:

"All my sins were laid on Jesus,
Jesus bore them on the tree;
God, Who knew them, laid them on Him,
And, believing, I am free!"

Before the Savior died He cried triumphantly: "It is finished!" What was finished? All the work He came into this world to do; and that was to provide a full, free and eternal salvation for all who will rely, wholly and entirely, upon His finished work, and receive Him, by faith, to be their own personal Savior. God signified His entire satisfaction in, and His full acceptance of this finished work of Christ by raising Him from the dead on the third day. Thus the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is God's acknowledgment, or receipt, to the world, that all the work needed for our salvation has been done, once and forever. Thus it is not our good works, our strivings to be better, our good resolves, any religious ceremony through which *we* have passed or may pass, our prayers, or our sorrow for sins that merit God's favor and salvation; but *Christ's finished work on Calvary*, and this *alone* has secured this salvation for us! Is not this good news?

Let us illustrate this in a simple way. Let us suppose you owe a large sum of money to a man. When the time comes to pay the debt, you discover you have not a penny to meet the obligation. The creditor threatens to sue you, and this naturally distresses you very much. A rich friend of yours, hearing of your trouble, comes to you and says: "Don't you worry any more about that debt of yours. I am going to go to the creditor and shall pay him the money you owe, and I will bring you a receipt, in full, for your debt." Away he goes and, sure enough, returns in a little while with the receipt which states that the creditor has received full payment for your debt, in acknowledgment of which he issues the receipt. Naturally, you overwhelm your friend with grateful thanks. Now, do you still owe the money to that creditor? No. Was it because *you* paid the debt? No, for you had nothing to pay. Then how do you come to be free of that dreadful debt? You reply: "My friend saw my need and paid the debt for me." This is exactly what the Lord Jesus did on Calvary. He knew all our many sins and met all the law's demands against them. Because He bore all our sins, He suffered the full penalty of God's judgment in our place that we might go free. Have you ever believed this good news and thanked the Savior for what He did for you? If not, why not do it right now? (Luke 7:41-43).

Let us illustrate once more. Supposing you committed a crime, the penalty for which was death. After your arrest, trial and conviction, you were sentenced to death by hanging. On the morning of the

execution, as you are led to the scaffold, to your surprise you see the judge who sentenced you. As the executioner approaches to place the rope around your neck, the judge steps forward and says to the executioner: "I have come to save this person from the consequences of his crime. I will assume the liability of his crime and satisfy all the requirements of the law against him by dying as his substitute. Put the rope around my neck and hang me instead of him." Let us suppose that such an exchange could take place, and the rope was placed around the judge's neck and he was hung instead of you; how would you describe what that judge had done? You would doubtless reply: "That judge loved me, undeserving though I was, assumed my guilt and died for me, and thus saved me from the consequences of my crime."

This is exactly what the Lord Jesus did for us on Calvary's cross. *We* should have died in our sins and been banished from God's presence forever; but Christ, the Lord of all creation and Judge of all the earth, became our Substitute, took all our sins, bore them in His own body and put them away at the cost of His Own precious life's blood. He was forsaken by God as He hung on that cross, that we might be welcomed and pardoned. He suffered all the punishment that should have been ours, that we might go free. Have you ever thanked the blessed Savior for what He did for you? The apostle Paul did and said: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" His confession was: "The Son of God who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me!*" (2 Corinthians 9:15; Galatians 2:20). Read also Isaiah 53:5; Mark 10:45; Matthew 1:21; John 10:11, 15-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 3:18; Revelation 5:9.

Thus, in this chapter, we have tried to make clear what God has done to make this salvation possible to every lost and guilty sinner. He has revealed His love to all; He has sent His Son to be the Savior of all; and Christ, by His work on the cross, has made this salvation possible to all.

Chapter Three: The Way of God's Salvation or How May A Sinner Be Saved?

Perhaps some may be asking themselves the question that a man asked hundreds of years ago: "What must *I* do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30-31). If you are really in earnest as to this matter of your salvation from the consequences of your sins, then I am sure you will allow nothing to hinder you from finding out just how you may come into possession of this wonderful salvation that you need so badly, and which God has provided so bountifully. Depend on it, if you sincerely desire to be saved, God is far more desirous to save you! In fact, it is God Who has created this desire within you. The Holy Spirit was sent into the world

for the express purpose of convincing the sinner of his deep need of a Savior (John 16:7-11). If you have been brought to realize that you are a lost, guilty, helpless, hopeless and hell-deserving sinner, then you may be quite certain that the Holy Spirit has produced this conviction within you. Jesus said: "I am not come to call the [self] righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). It is only the guilty who realize their need of a pardon; the lost who see their need of a Savior, and the sick who want a doctor. Are you saying: "I realize that I am a sinner, deserving only of God's eternal wrath; and that Christ, by His death on the cross, has provided a salvation for me from this wrath; but I do not know how to make *this* Savior *my* Savior, and *this* salvation *my* salvation. O, what must I do to be saved?" Is this your problem? Then read carefully what follows, for we shall try to answer this question as simply as possible.

First, *own your need frankly to God*. Tell the God, against Whom you have sinned, just what you are. Own to Him that you are just what He says you are in His holy book.

(1) *Tell Him you are a guilty sinner*, and that you have sinned deliberately, again and again, against the voice of conscience and the word of God. Do not try to minimize your guilt and make it seem less than it is. As God asks you: "Are you guilty or not guilty of sinning against Me?" reply frankly: "I am guilty, and have nothing to say in my defense" (Luke 15:18; 18:13).

(2) *Tell Him you are a lost sinner*. Own that you have gone astray into the bypaths of sin and that, unless He saves you, you will be lost forever. Make certain of this. If you are not saved, you are *lost*. In 2 Corinthians 4:3 we read: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that *are lost*." If the light of the gospel has not yet shone into your heart, then you are numbered amongst those whom God says "are lost."

(3) *Tell Him you are a helpless sinner*, unable to do one thing to merit His salvation. Own that all your attempts to gain God's favor by your good resolves, good works, prayers, religion and tears, have been utterly in vain. With the hymn writer, say from the heart:

"Not the labor of my hands,
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin cannot atone—
Thou must save, and Thou alone!"

The Bible describes each sinner as being "without strength" (Romans

5:6) and as "dead in [his] trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). He is said to be without life, peace, hope, God, or Christ (Ephesians 2:12). In this condition, therefore, you are utterly helpless to save yourself, but your very helplessness is an opportunity for God to display His power in your salvation.

(4) *Tell Him you are a hell-deserving sinner.* Own to God that, if you had your just deserts, He would be perfectly right and just in banishing you from His presence to hell, there to weep and wail and gnash your teeth forever (Mark 16:16; Romans 1:18, 2:3-11). This may not sound very nice, but it is absolutely true. Do you believe it? Are you prepared to own it to God? Can you truthfully, honestly and sincerely say, from your heart, to God: "O God, I own myself to be a guilty, lost, helpless and hell-deserving sinner"?

Secondly, believe the gospel, or the good news concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the work He accomplished on Calvary's cross. That is to say, accept, as true, what God's word says Christ did on the cross to secure your salvation.

(1) *Believe that the Lord Jesus knew all about your need as a sinner* and loved you just the same. It is blessedly and gloriously true that the Son of God loved you (Galatians 2:20). It was love that caused Him to leave heaven above and come into this world to seek and save the lost (2 Corinthians 8:9). He said to His disciples on one occasion: "As [My] Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). Happy are those who can say with John the apostle: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us" (1 John 4:16). Do you know and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ loves you in spite of what you are?

(2) *Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary, bore (or carried) all your sins in His Own body and died to put them away.* Forget about everyone else's sins for the moment, and just think of your own sins, as though you were the only sinner in the world. Now ask yourself the question: "Whose sins did Jesus bear on the cross?" The Bible tells us plainly: "His Own self bare *our* sins in His Own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). John the Baptist said of Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). In Isaiah 53:5 we read: "He was wounded for *our* transgressions; He was bruised for *our* iniquities." Now change the word "our" for "my" in these Scriptures, and you have the answer to the question: "Whose sins did Jesus bear on the cross?"

The believer can say truthfully, with the word of God as his authority: "The Lord Jesus, on the cross of Calvary, knew all about *my* guilt and willingly allowed God to put all *my* sins on Him that He might bear

them in His Own body and receive, at the hands of God, all the punishment that *my* sins deserved. Christ therefore died for *my* sins and, because He has suffered all the penalty due to *me*, I may be saved from the consequences of my sins." Read this again very carefully, and see if you can truthfully say this of the Lord Jesus. This is what it means to believe the gospel. No one can believe this for you; *you* must believe it for *yourself*. Will you do so? If you believe that God put all your sins on Jesus, and that He has borne all the penalty due to your sins, then do you not see there is nothing more for you to do? If Christ has done it *all*, why not thank Him for it and rest, in simple faith, upon His finished work and say:

"I need no other argument,
I need no other plea;
It is *enough* that Jesus died,
And that He died for *me*."

Thirdly, *accept the Lord Jesus Christ, by a definite act of faith, to be your own personal Savior* and, that moment, you will be saved. This is what is meant by the words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *shalt* be saved." God uses many words to convey what it means to believe on Christ. Let us look at a few.

(1) *It means coming to Him*. Jesus said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Here is a little child just learning to walk. Father holds the little one upright with its feet on the ground. Mother kneels a few inches away, holds out her arms and says: "Come!" The child, believing that its parent will enfold it in her arms, takes its first steps alone and finds itself in its mother's embrace. The Lord Jesus, though unseen to your natural sight, is standing with open arms inviting you to come to Him, and promises to give you rest from the burden of sins. Believe His word and, in your heart, take that step of faith and come to Him, just as you are, and you will prove He is as good as His word, and sweet rest shall be your portion. He will give you rest from an accusing conscience, rest from the dread of a coming judgment, and rest from all your vain efforts to save yourself. Thus believing is *coming* to Him.

(2) *It means receiving Him*. In John 1:12 we read, "As many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Let us suppose it is your birthday and your parents have bought you a watch as a birthday gift. Father holds it out to you and says: "Here is our birthday gift to you, with our love and best wishes." Now what is left for you to do to make that gift your very own? You reply, and rightly: "I must receive it." Exactly. If you believed your father's word when he offered you the

watch, you would take him at his word by receiving the gift, and would doubtless thank the giver. God offers you His beloved Son to be your Savior and says: "Though you have sinned against Me, and your sins deserve eternal death, yet My Son, on Calvary's cross, bore all your sins and died in your stead in order to save you. I now offer Him to you as your Savior. Will you receive Him as your own personal Savior, right here and now?" What will you say to this? Will you respond from the heart: "Lord Jesus, I now receive you, into my heart, to be my own personal Savior." Thus believing is *receiving* Him.

(3) *It means trusting Him.* In Ephesians 1:13 Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that they had trusted in Christ for their salvation and says: "In Whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." Let us suppose that you have a large sum of money in your possession and do not want to run the risk of carrying it around, lest it should be stolen. You know of a banker and have every confidence in his personal honesty and in the security of the strong room in his bank. What would you do with that money if you really believed in that banker? You reply: "I would entrust that money to his care." In other words, you would prove your belief by your trust. The Lord Jesus wants you to *trust* yourself to Him, to *rely* on the work He did for you at the cross and *commit* yourself to Him for the salvation of your soul. Will you do it *now*? Will you say, from your heart:

"Just as I am, poor, sinful, lost;
I come to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ;
In simple faith, I trust in Thee,
Who bore my sins and died for me."

The moment you really come to Christ, receive Him as your own personal Savior and trust in Him for salvation, you will be saved. How do we know this? Because God definitely says so: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Thus believing is *trusting* in Him.

Fourthly, *confess, or own Christ, as the Lord of your life before the world.* This is where many fail, and consequently do not enter into the full enjoyment of God's salvation. In Romans 10:9-10 we read: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath 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." The Savior once said to one whom He had saved: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5:18-19).

To confess Christ as the Lord of your life means that you acknowledge Him before others, as your Owner and Ruler, and that you are therefore no longer your own, but His; to do what He says, to go where He commands, and to be what He wants you to be. It means that you enthrone the Lord Jesus as supreme in your heart and allow Him to have His way in your life. It means that you realize and submit to the truth of God's word when it declares of the believer: "Ye are *not your own*, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This, of course, entails a complete break with the world and its sinful pleasures, and a bold witness to others of the fact that you have taken Christ as your Savior and Lord, and henceforth desire to live for His glory.

Are you prepared to take this bold stand for Christ, and own Him bravely as your Lord before the world, in spite of its ridicule, scorn, contempt and persecution? Remember, Christ was not ashamed of you. He suffered the rejection of men. They spat in His face and crucified Him, but He endured the cross and despised the shame for you (Hebrews 12:2). The world may laugh at you because you own Christ as your Lord and live for Him; but you are thereby sharing His rejection. Jesus said to His disciples: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19).

When you have received the Lord Jesus Christ to be your own personal Savior, tell someone else about it. Inform your parents and your friends and seek to witness for Christ as you find opportunity. This will bring the joy of salvation into your soul, for you will have nailed your colors to the mast and like Paul, by this you say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). What would you think of a soldier who was ashamed of his country, or a boy who was ashamed of his mother? How much worse is that person who is ashamed to own the Savior Who loved him and gave Himself for him?

Here, then, is the way to be saved, as found in God's word. Let us summarize. First, own yourself to be a guilty, lost, helpless and hell-deserving sinner. Second, believe that the Lord Jesus Christ loved you, bore your sins on Calvary and died for you. Third, receive Christ, by a definite act of faith, as your own personal Savior. Then, fourth, confess Him as the Lord of your life to others. Are you prepared to do this, solemnly and sincerely, *right now*? If so, lift up your heart to the Lord Jesus and tell Him so, in your own words. Thank Him for dying for your sins; tell Him you now accept Him as your own Savior and that you will henceforth own Him as your Lord.

Perhaps it might help to make it a more definite thing to you, if you wrote down, in your own words, this momentous decision to accept the Lord Jesus as your own Savior. The following statement is merely a suggestive one, and contains the essential elements necessary to an intelligent decision for Christ:

My Decision

"Owning myself to be a guilty, lost, helpless and hell-deserving sinner, but believing that the Lord Jesus Christ, on Calvary's cross, bore my sins, took my place and died for me; I now, in simple faith, definitely receive Him to be my own personal Savior and own Him before others as the Lord of my life."

Signed

Date.....

Needless to say, the mere signing of such a statement, or any other decision, will not save you. It is the receiving of a *Person*, the blessed Son of God, as a living, loving Savior into your heart, that will result in your salvation. God's word says: "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12). May God grant that, right here and now, you may solemnly and sincerely make this great choice of Christ as your Savior and the Lord of your life!

Chapter Four: The Assurance of God's Salvation or How May We Know That We Are Saved?

Sometimes the question is asked: "It is possible for a person to *know*, for certain, that he is saved?" We answer unhesitatingly: "Yes, thank God, it is the privilege of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to *know* that he is saved; to *know* that his sins are forgiven, and to *know* that he is the possessor of eternal life.

The next question is: "*How* can we know these things?" The answer is quite simple and wholly satisfactory to the believer. We may know these things on the authority of the sure, certain and unalterable word of God. It may be simply stated thus: The *work* that Christ accomplished on the cross makes the believer perfectly *safe*; and the *word* that God has given makes the believer absolutely *sure* of his salvation. Thus Christ's *work* makes us *safe* and God's *word* makes us *sure*. Grasp this simple fact firmly in your mind, for it summarizes all we shall have to say on this subject.

Now let us turn to God's word. In 1 John 5:13 we read: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God,

that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life." To whom is the Apostle John writing? To those who have believed on the Son of God. Does this describe you? Have you come to Him as a sinner and received Him by faith as your Savior? Then you have believed on the Son of God. Now what does God, through the writer, say to those who have believed on the Son of God? "That ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life." Who says so? God says so, and that settles it, once and for all! Supposing you had asked one of these believers: "How do you *know* that you have eternal life?" What would he have replied? "Because God tells me so in His word." Could you wish for anything better than this?

How do we know that we are lost, guilty, helpless and hell-deserving sinners? Because God tells us so in His word. How do we know that God loved us and sent His Son to bear our sins and die for us on Calvary? Because God tells us so in His word. How do we know that if we will trust Christ as our Savior we shall be saved? Because God tells us so in His word. How do we know that we are saved, that our sins are forgiven and that we have eternal life? Because God tells us so in His word. Apart from God's word we would know nothing of our need of Christ or of His salvation. Shut the Bible and what do we know of these things? Nothing! Open the Bible and what do we know? All that God has been pleased to reveal. Is this clear?

Let us illustrate. Here is a man who has just paid his grocer's bill. Let us ask him: "How do you *know* that your bill has been paid and that you are freed from debt?" What will be his reply? He will take out the receipt and say: "Here is the proof, in black and white, in this receipted bill." The payment of the money made him *safe* from debt; the written word made him *sure* the debt had been paid. Here is a man who has been sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment for a crime he has committed, but the governor of the state has issued him a pardon. Naturally, the prisoner is overjoyed at the good news. Supposing you were to ask him: "But how do you *know* that you have been pardoned?" What would he reply? Would he say: "Because I feel happy." Of course not. He would simply show you the written words of the governor and say: "Here is the proof, read it for yourself!"

There is no such thing in the Bible as "feeling saved." Let us revert to our illustration again. Did the man *know* he was pardoned because he *felt* happy, or did he *feel* happy because he *knew* he was pardoned? Of course, the latter is the correct answer. Now let us ask another question: Does a person *know* he is saved because he *feels* happy, or does he *feel* happy because he *knows* he is saved? Again the answer is perfectly simple—he feels happy because he knows he is saved. *Feelings have nothing to do with the knowledge of salvation.*

God's word, *and God's word alone*, is the basis of the believer's assurance, or certainty of his salvation. Some Christians make the sad mistake of being occupied with their *feelings* instead of God's *facts*. If they feel happy, they conclude that they must be saved; but if they are unhappy, they begin to be in doubt as to whether they are saved or not. Consequently, they have a fluctuating experience, with no settled assurance of their salvation. There is a chorus that runs thus:

"Believe, and the feeling may come or may go,
Believe in the word that was written to show
That all who believe their salvation may *know*—
So believe, and keep right on believing!"

No wonder someone said: "Be my feelings what they will, Jesus is my Savior still!"

Now let us look at some other Scriptures and learn more of the certainty of our salvation. First, turn to John 5:24. These are the words of the Savior Himself: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life and *shall not* come into condemnation; but *is* passed from death unto life." Does it mention anything, about *feelings* in this verse? No, here are facts to be believed, a Person to be received, and a salvation to be enjoyed. Have you heard His word and believed on Him? Then what does Christ say has taken place in the life of the believer? He is assured that he has everlasting life; that he shall not come into the judgment, and that he is already passed out of his death in trespasses and sins into the possession of eternal life.

Here is another verse, and again it is the Savior who speaks: "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, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). Here is the Divine assurance that the believer shall never perish, but is saved for time and all eternity. This is the "eternal life assurance policy" that Christ issues to all who trust Him! Again, in this Scripture, you will have noticed there is no mention of *feeling* secure, but of *being* eternally secure, a vastly different thing.

Let us glance at one more Scripture in order to drive this truth home to each heart. In Acts 13:38-39 we read: "Be it known unto you...that through this Man [Christ] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and, by Him, all that believe *are* justified [or declared righteous] from all things." There is certainly no uncertainty in this proclamation, for it assures the believer that he is already justified (or declared righteous) by God. If you would like to read some more Scriptures on the

assurance of salvation, read the following and mark them in your Bible: John 3:36; 6:47; 14:1-3; 20:31; Acts 10:43; Romans 5:1; 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:3-7; 2:8-9; Colossians 1:12-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 2:12; etc. These verses are well worth committing to memory and, as they are believed and stored in the mind, will bring assurance to you of the certainty of your salvation.

Three words should be kept distinct in our minds, and retained in the order in which they now appear—fact, faith, and feeling. They all begin with "F," so they can be easily remembered. First comes the *fact* of Christ's work on the cross. This is true whether it is believed or not. It will be always and eternally true that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This is the great fact of the gospel. Next comes *faith*, by which the hearer believes for himself the fact of Christ's work, trusts Him as his own Savior and is consequently saved. Third comes *feeling*, which flows from the assurance of this salvation which is given in the word of God. The moment this order is reversed, confusion follows. It is not feeling, faith, and fact; or faith, fact, and feeling; but fact, faith, and feeling. Let us praise God for the glorious *fact* of the gospel, place our *faith* in the Christ of the gospel, and the *feelings* will follow as a natural result.

Some people get occupied with their *faith* and wonder if "they have believed in the right kind of way," but it is not faith that saves, it is *Christ*. It is not the *amount* of our faith, but the *Person* in Whom your faith is placed, that counts. I may have strong faith in a weak bank and place all my money in it and thus lose it all. I may have weak faith in a strong bank and it is perfectly safe. It was the kind of *bank*, and not the kind of *faith* that made it safe. The Devil will do his best to get the believer occupied with anything and everything except the Person and work of Christ. You will never have any settled assurance until you look away from yourself and your feelings, and rest simply in the bare statements of the word of God. Christ said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

The story is told of an old lady who said she knew she was saved simply because God said so in His word. Someone remarked to her one day: "But if God went back on His word, then you would be lost?" "Yes," replied the old Christian: "If God went back on His word, I would be lost; but God would be the greatest Loser!" "How do you make that out?" inquired the objector. "Well," she retorted, "if God went back on His word, I would only lose my *soul*; but God would lose His *character*!" Yes, God is as good as His word. He cannot lie, nor would He deceive anyone, for "He is faithful that promised" (Titus

1:2; Hebrews 10:23). Rest, then, implicitly in His faithful word, fellow believer, and you will *know*, beyond any doubt, that you are eternally saved and consequently eternally secure.

There is an old saying that "murder will out," and the same is true of salvation! When one is genuinely saved, the evidences of it will be seen in the life. Where this evidence is lacking, one may question the reality of a work of God in the soul (Philippians 1:6; 2:13). Our Savior's words need to be pondered: "By their *fruits* ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). We read in Hebrews 6:9 of "the things that *accompany* salvation"; that is, those *inward* evidences to *oneself* and the *outward* evidences to *others* that we have been truly born again and consequently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible speaks of two kinds of professing Christians: those who are *sham* and those who are *real*; those who merely *profess* to be Christians, and those who truly *possess* Christ as a living Reality in their lives; those who give only a *mental assent* to the facts of the gospel, and those who give the *consent of their will* to Christ as the Lord of their lives; those whose Christianity begins and ends in their *talk*, and those whose Christianity is proved by their *walk*, or manner of life. The Lord Jesus solemnly warned His hearers: "Not every one that *saith* unto Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

It is not surprising, therefore, that many who profess to be saved soon go back to their old life and prove, by that very act, that there was no reality to their profession. Their *emotions* may have been stirred, their intellects awakened; but their *wills* were not yielded to Christ in a wholehearted acceptance of the gospel. Christ declared: "If ye *continue* in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Thus the proof of true discipleship is *continuance* for Christ, obedience to His word, and a growth in His grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). May this be true of the reader!

Chapter Five: The Results of God's Salvation or What Should Be the Effect of Being Saved?

We have already seen that one of the results of God's salvation is the impartation, to the believer, of a new life, or a new nature, so that he becomes a partaker "of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). But God does not remove from the believer the old, evil, corrupt nature, called "the flesh." It still remains within him and is *never eradicated* during his lifetime on earth. Thus each Christian has these two natures within him: the old nature, called "the flesh," incapable of anything good, and

the new nature, called "the spirit," incapable of anything evil. Naturally, the result of this is a conflict within (Galatians 5:17). "The flesh" will seek to control and lead the believer to think, say and do those things displeasing to God, his Father; while the new nature will seek to dominate and lead the believer to think, say and do those things pleasing to God.

Many a Christian has been puzzled by this fact, and has become discouraged and even doubted that he was ever truly saved. He imagined that when he trusted Christ as his Savior, and was thus born again, all tendency to sin would be removed; but he discovered, after a while, that "the flesh" was still within him and was unchanged in its evil characteristics. What, then, is the child of God to do in order to live a life pleasing to His heavenly Father and his Lord and Savior?

The story is told of a young convert from heathenism who, when he first trusted Christ as his Savior, was filled with joy and peace. A few days later, however, with woebegone face he approached the missionary and said: "Sir, when I first trusted Christ I was so happy, but now I am sad." "Why, what has happened?" inquired the missionary. "Well," replied the convert, "I have discovered there are two dogs within me, a white dog and a black dog." This puzzled the missionary until he realized that the native was referring to the two natures within him: the white dog, the new nature; and the black dog, the old nature. He then asked: "And what are these dogs doing?" The young Christian replied: "They are fighting with each other all day long! The white dog bites the black dog and the black dog bites the white dog!" "Yes," thought the missionary, "that's just how Scripture puts it: "The flesh lusteth [or desireth] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17). Then the missionary put this question to the young convert: "Which of these dogs gets the victory?" Now mark carefully the answer he received. The native wrinkled his brow in thought and at length replied: "Well, sir, I've found it all depends to which of the dogs I say 'sic 'em'!" In other words, this young believer discovered, as you will, that your *will* is the deciding factor as to which of these natures is to control your life.

God's word enjoins the believer to have "no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). That is to say, he is not to expect any good from it, but treat it with distrust and suspicion. Again, he is told to "make not provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). That is, he is to deny its claims for attention or recognition, and refuse to pander to its desires or lusts. The flesh must be starved, denied and kept in subjection. Once this vigilance is relaxed, the flesh will again seek to dominate and its operations will make painful history in the life of the Christian.

We must accept God's verdict upon the flesh and agree to His judgment upon it. Like Paul, we must learn "that in me, (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). As we learn and act upon this fact, we shall not be surprised or disappointed at the uprisings of this old nature within. In the measure that we take advantage of the provision God has made in giving us this new nature, and seek to develop it by feeding upon God's word, keeping in touch with Him by prayer, and yielding our lives to live to His glory; in that measure we shall be enabled to "walk in the Spirit...and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Do you want to be a devoted, joyous and useful Christian, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing glory to Him and blessing into the lives of others? If so, your life must be lived under the control of the new nature. We are told that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance [self-control]" (Galatians 5:22-23). It is possible for a child of God, through carelessness of life, prayerlessness, lack of study of God's word, slackness in witnessing for Christ, tampering with questionable amusements and allowing unjudged sin in his life, to live under the control of the flesh; and thus bring sadness into his own life, disgrace to the name of Christianity, and no fruit to the glory of the One Whom he once professed to know, love, and serve. Surely no Christian, reading these words, would want to live such a life; yet, alas, many do. This is the danger to which all Christians are exposed; therefore, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. With these preliminary words, let us now ask ourselves the question at the head of this chapter: "What should be the effect of being saved?" or "How may I live a happy and useful Christian life?"

First, *there should be a desire for the regular and systematic reading and study of the word of God.* Just as a new-born baby naturally desires the milk which sustains its life and develops its growth; so every born again person should "desire the sincere milk of the word [of God] that [he] may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

The Bible is the Divinely inspired word of God, and is therefore absolutely true and authoritative on all questions (2 Timothy 3:14-17). It is the full and complete revelation of the will of God to the believer. How important, then, that it be read regularly and systematically! There should be a definite time set apart for its reading each morning and evening, and nothing allowed to interfere with this, for nothing can compensate a person for a lack of the knowledge of God's word. Through the Bible God speaks to His people to comfort, guide, encourage, warn, rebuke, and build them up in their most holy faith. Thus, through the Scriptures, the believer may learn to know the will

of God for him.

Neglect of the word of God is a sure sign of spiritual declension, or a going back to the control of the old nature. The flesh does not relish the reading of the Scriptures: but the new nature feeds, grows and develops through it. Let each Christian solemnly and sincerely determine that he will set apart a period each morning and evening for the reading of God's precious word.

The Bible should be read (1) *Reverently*, for it is God's word. All lightness should be set aside as we approach its sacred pages. (2) *Prayerfully*. We should pray David's prayer: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18). As we thus prayerfully read the Scriptures, God will open our spiritual eyes to see and understand His word. (3) *Dependently*, remembering that the Holy Spirit, Who inspired the Bible to be written, is also within us to be our Teacher, and to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to us, and to guide us into all truth (John 16:13-15). (4) *Carefully*. Let us not skip over its pages, but note carefully what God has to say. It is a good plan to mark any verse with a pencil that impresses itself upon the mind and to memorize these verses, and thus allow the memory to become a storehouse of the very words of God. (5) *Regularly*. We are told that the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). Do not allow a day to pass without the Bible being read. The best time is the early morning when the mind is freshest and the memory most retentive. (6) *Systematically*. It is good to have a definite scheme by which the whole Bible can be read within the course of a year. This is not so difficult as it sounds. If three chapters of the Old Testament are read each morning, and two chapters of the New Testament each evening; the Old Testament will be read once a year, and the New Testament twice each year. Thus a fine knowledge of the Bible will be obtained. (7) *Obediently*. Jesus once said: "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). God's word gives light that must be followed, and issues commands that must be obeyed if it is to have any real practical good in our lives. We are warned not to be hearers only, but "*doers* of the word" (James 1:22). See also John 15:14; 13:17.

God's word is likened unto a Sword to defend (Ephesians 6:17); a Light to illumine (Psalm 119:130, 105); a Mirror to reveal (James 1:23-25); Milk to develop (1 Peter 1:2); Meat to strengthen (Hebrews 5:12-14); Fire to test reality and consume the dross (Jeremiah 23:29); a Hammer to break (Jeremiah 23:29); Honey to be enjoyed (Psalm 19:10); and Gold to enrich (Psalm 119:72). Surely we should praise God for giving us such a wonderful book, and so seek to read and study its pages that we shall come to know and do His will in our lives.

Read also Psalm 19:7-14; 1:1-3; 119:11, 98, 160; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15.

Secondly, *there should be a desire to spend time in God's presence for praise and prayer.* By praise the child of God expresses his appreciation to his heavenly Father for all He has revealed Himself to be in Christ, His beloved Son; for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; for the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the word of God; for his salvation and all the blessings it has brought, and also for all the temporal mercies such as health, strength, soundness of mind, food, shelter and clothing, etc. (Ephesians 1:1-12; James 1:17; Colossians 1:12-13). God wants a praising people (Psalm 50:23), and it delights His heart to hear the thanksgiving of those who know Him and appreciate all He has done (Psalm 103:1-22).

By prayer the Christian makes known to his heavenly Father all his needs, and asks for that which is in accordance with His will, as revealed in His word. God wants His people to come to Him with all their cares, problems, trials, difficulties, failings, temptations and sorrows. Nothing is too small to take to Him, for He delights to hear their prayers and has promised: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15). God also wants to hear His people's prayers on behalf of others; for all that are in authority, for our loved ones, for our unsaved relatives and friends, for gospel preachers and missionaries in the foreign field, etc. (1 Timothy 2:1-4). See also 1 Peter 5:7; Matthew 6:5-15; Ephesians 6:18-20; Philippians 4:6-8.

The habit of prayer should be cultivated until it becomes second nature to take everything to God in prayer and tell Him simply and frankly all our problems, needs and desires. We shall then prove that God's word is right when it declares: "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31). Well did the poet write:

"O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pains we bear:
O because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!"

Thirdly, *there should be a desire to witness for Christ and bring others to know Him.* Every Christian should earnestly seek to win others for Christ by his own personal testimony to the saving power of the gospel, and back up this testimony by a godly and consistent Christian life. A person may well question the reality of his own

salvation if he does not desire the salvation of others. There is no joy comparable to soul-winning; to have the unspeakable privilege of leading someone else to trust the Savior and thus be eternally saved. Paul's motto was: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:20-23).

The Lord said to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Again He said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). A witness is one who tells what he has seen, heard and experienced. Every Christian is therefore a witness for Christ to tell others of Him and seek to win them to Him. Let us, who profess to belong to Christ, tell our relatives, friends and others of the Savior we have come to know, love, trust and serve that they, too, may be saved.

There is a natural timidity about all of us that must be faced and conquered. As the Scripture puts it: "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Proverbs 29:25). We must not allow the scorn, ridicule and contempt of the world to hinder us from a bold witness for our Lord Who endured the cross and despised the shame for us (Hebrews 12:1-3). The Devil also will do his best to prevent the believer from being a soul-winner; but Bible study and much prayer will increase both the desire and the courage to be a valiant soldier of the King of kings. The first thing Andrew did, after he had come to know Christ was to bring his brother, Peter, to the Savior (John 1:40-42). Many an entire family has been brought to Christ because of the courageous witness and consistent Christian life of one of its members. Will *you* be that one?

There are many methods of winning souls and God's word assures us that "he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Much wisdom, tact and guidance is necessary, and this God has promised to give to those who ask Him (James 1:5-6). A good method is to carefully and prayerfully distribute good, sound gospel tracts which you have read yourself. These, handed out in a courteous and tactful manner, will serve as conversation openers to introduce the gospel. Constant practice will make perfect, and you will experience the joy of being in His service. If Christ so loved us as to give Himself for us, then surely, in love for Him, we should give ourselves to Him that He may use us to win souls for Him. Read carefully and prayerfully the following Scriptures: Romans 10:1, 12:17; 1:14-16; Ezekiel 33:1-6; Proverbs 24:11-12; Matthew 28:18-20; Daniel 12:3.

Fourthly, *there should be a desire for separation from all known sin in the life.* Anything of a doubtful or questionable character should be avoided, either in the way of reading, amusements, or recreation (I

Thessalonians 5:22). God wants His people to be clean, both morally and spiritually, for any un-cleanness tolerated in the life unfits the Christian for effective service, robs him of his joy in the Lord and dulls his spiritual senses (1 Timothy 4:8-9, 16; 2 Timothy 2:19-22). Many a Christian, who might have been a power for God, has been laid on the shelf because he allowed questionable things and unjudged and unconfessed sin in his life (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 11:31-32).

When a child of God becomes conscious of having committed some sin in thought, word, deed, or attitude, he should immediately confess it to his heavenly Father and thus take sides with God against it, and then turn from that sin with loathing. If the wrong has been done against anyone else, then an apology to that person and restitution of the wrong done should be made (Matthew 18:15-22). This self-discipline, needless to say, is not desired by the old nature; but should be constantly practiced, for the price of a joyous and useful Christian life is ceaseless vigilance; or, as the Lord Himself put it, a constant need to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41). Someone once gave this advice to a young believer: "Keep short accounts with God." In other words, confess any sin the moment it is committed, so that communion may be constantly maintained (1 John 1:9). Self-confidence and self-satisfaction are twin evils the believer must avoid (Galatians 6:3; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 8:2; John 15:5).

Here is a fivefold test that can be applied to any problem arising in the Christian life concerning any purpose or plan that has been formed: (1) Is it according to the word of God? If there is any Scripture that forbids such a plan or purpose; then it should be immediately dropped. (2) Does this plan or purpose violate any *principle* of the word of God? There are certain broad principles laid down in the Scriptures concerning cleanness of thought, purity of life, honesty of dealing and truthfulness of word. Does this thing that the Christian contemplates violate any of these principles? (3) Can I do it to the glory of God? We are told in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Will this thing we are going to say, or do, or our visit to this place or that bring glory to God? If not, then it had best be dropped. (4) Can I ask God's blessing on it? If not, then it had best be left undone. (5) Would I like to be found doing this thing, or in this place if the Lord Jesus were to come? (Matthew 24:42-46). The story is told of a man who was debating with himself as to whether he should wear a slightly soiled collar he had used the previous evening. His wife settled the problem for him by saying: "John, if it's doubtful, it's dirty!" If we treat any doubtful thing in the Christian life as dirty, we shall not be very far wrong!

Fifthly, *there should be a desire for the companionship and fellowship*

of Christians. David could say, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee" (Psalm 119:63). There is much truth in the old proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together." It is God's desire for His people to meet together for prayer, praise, worship, the study of the Bible and the proclamation of the gospel. Each Christian should see to it that he seeks the fellowship of a company of believers who meet in accordance with those principles laid down in the New Testament Scriptures, and thus enter into the enjoyment of the love, fellowship, hospitality, friendship, encouragement, support, and blessing that such association brings.

The early disciples gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus for mutual prayer, help and edification (Acts 2:41-47). On one occasion, after they had been arrested and allowed to go free, we are told: "Being let go, they went to their own company" (Acts 4:23). See to it that you meet with "your own company" of fellow believers, who have been born again, who believe the Bible to be the word of God, who hold and teach the great fundamental doctrines of God's word, and who welcome all believers to their fellowship who are sound in life and doctrine. Do not forsake the regular assembly gatherings of believers for prayer, praise and the ministry of God's word (Hebrews 10:25).

Your closest friends should be Christians, for the Bible says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...for what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). In Malachi 3:16 we are told that "they that feared the LORD spake often one to another." Seek the friendship of good, godly, consistent, and Bible-loving Christians, for unity is strength and they will encourage you to go on your pilgrim journey. "The friendship of the world is enmity [to] God" (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). Many a believer has lost out in his Christian life because he did not break with his old worldly companionships.

Sixthly, *there should be a desire to obey the Lord's commands regarding the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.* If you will read carefully in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, you will be struck with the fact that, after a person believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, he was baptized as a believer. Notice Acts 2:41; 8:29-38; 9:18; 10:43-48; 16:14-15, 30-34; 18:8. Baptism, of course, as you have read, is only for believers, and is simply the figure or picture of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Just as He went under the waves and billows of God's wrath because of our sins and died and rose again; so the believer, at the command of his Lord, is baptized with water to show his identification with Him in His death and resurrection, and his desire to walk in newness of life. See Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16. The spiritual significance of baptism is found in Romans 6:4-

5; Colossians 2:12.

The Lord's supper was instituted by the Savior on the eve of His betrayal and death (Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25). In 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 the risen Lord gave a special revelation to Paul concerning this ordinance. Read these Scriptures carefully and mark well the words of the Lord Jesus: "This do in remembrance of Me." Make known your desire to thus remember the Lord to a Scripturally gathered company of believers and they will doubtless gladly welcome you to the enjoyment of this great privilege.

Seventhly, *there should be a desire to be one's best for God.* God's purpose in our salvation is that we might be "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6; 12, 14). He reminds each believer in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 thus: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Surely the supreme aim and purpose of each believer should be to allow this desire of God to be fulfilled in his life. The Christian is urged to so live that "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him" (2 Thessalonians 1:12). It is dreadfully possible for the believer to live a self-pleasing and self-glorifying life, and thus bring no pleasure or glory to God. We are distinctly warned not to live such a life (Romans 15:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:14-16). The judgment seat of Christ is ahead, at which our lives shall pass in review before Him, to earn either His commendation or censure, reward or loss. See 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Romans 14:7-10. Every Christian would do well to have this fact constantly before him and so live, that when that day comes, he will hear his Lord saying: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

How, then, can the believer live this God-glorifying life? First, *he should definitely yield himself and his body to God, for a righteous life* (Romans 6:13-14). That is, for an honest, upright, truthful and clean life before the world. God wants His people to live honorable lives in a world of sin, so that they shall shine like lights in the dark. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15). This calls for self-denial, self-judgment, and self-sacrifice; but it yields good returns in blessing to one's own soul and to the lives of others.

Second, *he should definitely yield his body to God as a living sacrifice, for a useful life* (Romans 12:1-2). Read these words carefully and upon your knees in the presence of God. Present your body to Him to do with you what He desires; to go where He wants you to go, to say what He wants you to say, and to be what He wants you to be. In this way, God promises you shall prove "what is that good, and

acceptable and perfect will of God." May this be true of both the writer and the reader, for by this twofold yielding of ourselves to God for a righteous and a useful life, the believer will be enabled to live the kind of Christian life that will bring glory to his Savior, joy and peace to himself, and blessing to the lives of others.

Thirdly, *he should give generously of his substance to the Lord*. God's statement to the believer: "Ye are not your own," includes not only the Christian's body, with all its faculties; but *all his personal property as well*. The child of God is viewed in Scripture as a *trustee* of all the property God has committed to his care and, he will be called one day to give an account of his stewardship. David recognized this fact and, as he gave liberally to the work of the Lord, he said: "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly...For all things come from Thee, and of Thine Own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14).

Each Christian should regularly set aside a definite portion of his income, be it large or small, and earmark it for the Lord and His work, and thus become a systematic and proportionate giver. See 1 Corinthians 16:2. Two chapters of the New Testament are devoted to this subject of the giving of one's substance to the Lord. Read them carefully, 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9. The grace of liberal giving is one of the acid tests of discipleship. Just as the reality of God's love for us was demonstrated in the gift of His Son, and as Christ's love was proven by the gift of His life for us; so the reality of our love to Him and devotion for Him is indicated by our sacrificial giving unto Him (Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 8:9, 9:7).

Under the law, the children of Israel were commanded by God to give a *tenth* of their possessions to the Lord. The Christian, however, is not under the law; but surely, as he realizes all that God has blessed him with in Christ, he will, out of love and gratitude, set aside a definite portion of his income for the work of the Lord, by which the meeting place of the assembly of believers is properly maintained, the needs of those who preach the word at home and abroad are supplied, and the poor of the flock are provided with the necessities of life.

In order to give in a Scriptural manner, five things should be noted. First, *we must honorably obtain what we give*. This entails the labor of our hands (Acts 20:33-35). Many young Christians earn money in various ways after school hours in order to be able to give of their substance to the Lord. God wants His people to be hardworking, honest and industrious (Romans 12:17). The Christian should avoid debt like a plague (Romans 13:8). It is far better to do without than to enter into financial obligations which put a millstone of debt around

one's neck.

Second, *we should exercise great care in what we spend on ourselves.* This does not mean that we should be miserly, but to spend one's whole income on dress and luxuries for one's own pleasure and comfort is not becoming to a child of God. This will call for stringent self-denial and budgeting of one's income, so as to be able to meet all the obligations necessary to honest living and the support of one's family and yet have a balance for the needs of others. One must resolutely shut his eyes to the seductive advertisements of many luxuries the believer can quite easily do without, with a little self-sacrifice.

The third thing about our giving is, *we should use discretion in making our spiritual investments,* so that the gift may be used to the best advantage. Much of the Lord's money has been poured into channels that have not been to the glory of God or the salvation of souls. We should thoroughly investigate before we invest and ask ourselves: "Will this money be used to further the spread of the gospel by those who believe the Bible to be God's word?" Many Christians are unconsciously contributing to the support of that which denies the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures they profess to believe. A little investigation would have saved them from this error. Let us be careful how we use the Lord's money and not waste it by careless giving.

Fourth, *we should give cheerfully and liberally.* A gift grudgingly given brings no glory to God or blessing to the giver. "God loveth a cheerful [and bountiful] giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). Think of the great honor God has given us of allowing us to give to Him! God will be no man's Debtor and has promised, in His own good time, an hundredfold on all spiritual investments, and this works out at ten thousand per cent, which is not a bad rate of interest! (Matthew 19:29). The Lord Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Giving brings joy to God, to the giver and to the receiver; therefore let us form the habit of regular, systematic and proportionate giving early in the Christian life (Matthew 6:19-21).

Fifth, *we should carefully account.* A book should be kept in which one's income and expenditure is recorded. Trustees should be faithful to their task and be able to render an account of their stewardship when the time comes (1 Corinthians 4:2; Luke 16:2). May it be true of us that: "As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love...see that ye abound in this grace [of giving] also" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

We have now come to the conclusion of our talk to young people on

the need, the provision, the way, the assurance and the results of God's Salvation, as found in the Bible. May God be pleased to bless this little booklet to the awakening and salvation of many precious souls; who, in turn, shall become the means, in God's hands, of blessing to others for the glory of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us—our Lord Jesus Christ, "to Whom be glory and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen!" (Revelation 1:5-6).

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