

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.*

Volume 11

JANUARY, 1967

Number 1

*"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).*

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### GROWTH (Number Two)

*Growth involves change, not compromise; a proper placing of truths in their respective places; an arranging of the whole so that the face of Jesus may be the clearer seen. There is a reorganization of thought, new perspectives, etc. While the essential properties of thought may remain unchanged, they are fitted together as by the Spirit of God in ways that make for wisdom and understanding, rather than a mere adherence to a concept, or the mouthing of a religious cliché. Our lives surely ought to be characterized by a continual growth in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). Spiritual advancement is to be a definite trait in our beings. However, this is not possible if our apprehension of the truth remains static and unchanged! Paul admonished believers to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23); "Be ye transformed, by the renewal of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). We shall inevitably be swayed by this world and its conceptions if we do not, by grace, seek a continual mind-renewal! Oh, that more were so disposed to see this! With many that have their settled doctrines, and their convenient creeds, this would seem like heresy; but that is only because they are "ignorant, and out of the way." Those that are advancing in grace and truth are fully aware to some measure, that the mind is truly renewed in Jesus! Not just once, but continually! This very day there are many of our conceptions which are faulty, and we trust, by God's grace, that they shall each be revealed to us, and that we shall advance from glory unto glory, and from faith unto faith. Praise the Lord! There is no disgrace in admitting that we do not know all of the truth; but what we know, we know, for salvation is of this spiritual Israel of which we are members! The necessity for daily renewal is known and experienced by the saints in Christ Jesus! Even as Paul declared he "died daily" (I Cor. 15:31), so there is daily resurrection and renewal which puts adventuresome freshness into this glorious life!*

Also, we are exhorted: "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, and continue in them: for in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). *How we must be frequently reminded that while truth itself is unchangeable and ever the same, yet much of it remains hidden to us because of our flesh, novicehood, sin, and defiled surroundings. It therefore behooves us to press hard toward the mark, toward Jesus Christ Himself. Be not deceived by the overabundance of sophists who piously mouth their settled views, set boundaries, and fences*

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## The Word of Truth

Published monthly by The Church Meeting at 26th and Colfax Street, Gary, Indiana.

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Crown Point, Ind. 46307

Address all correspondence to 7903 Hendricks Place,  
Crown Point, Indiana 46307

Sent Free upon request to all interested parties.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT  
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

### GROWTH (Number Two)

(From page 1)

about the Scriptures. Do not let such texts as John 3:16; Acts 2:38; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:1-4; I Tim. 2:9-10, and others be placed aside in your mind as being thoroughly understood. These are *Kingly edicts* along with "all Scripture" (II Tim. 3:16), and are "profitable" in many areas. *They are characterized by great depth, and are not subject to fleshly analysis.* Long had I subscribed to the erroneous conception that some selected scriptures were deep, while others were shallow and quite plain. In some cases, this may be true (as is cited in II Pet. 3:16). However, at that time my own understanding was the *determining* factor in depth - not the Truth. Thus the Scriptures were either profound or simple as measured by my own limited understanding. *Simplicity and profundity, however, are descriptions of the saint, not the truth! If truth is not understood, it is not so much because it is so deep as it is because the reader or hearer is so unlearned and ignorant. If the Word is understood, it is not so much because it is simple, as it is because the subject has been given to be wise with that wisdom "which cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning."* (James 3:15). Experience has taught me to view all Scripture as a "great deep," discernible ONLY through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:14-16), who searches out all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:10), and causes them to freshly spring up within the understanding.

Actually, this whole matter is summed up in one word—*"FOLLOWING."* It postulates something presently beyond full grasp, though faintly in the eye of faith. *I am, so to speak, held at arms length from many truths in order that I might press hard and diligently to obtain them.* My views, my living, my action, my speech - all must be ever moving forward unto the "image of God's Son" (Rom. 8:29-30); "growing up into Him in ALL things" (Eph. 4:15). Apollos advanced in knowledge and understanding (Acts 18:24-26); the Thessalonians grew in an apprehension of Christ's coming (II Thess. 2); and the Corinthians learned more properly of spiritual gifts (I Cor. 11-14). They all "FOLLOWED ON", going forward, as it were, and not crystalizing around what they had, *even though it was bonafide*, and from the Lord Himself. The beseechment of Scripture is to "ADD to your faith," (II Pet. 1:5-12); that is growth! The angels ASCENDED on Jacob's ladder, they did not merely carry it about; and we do well to do the

same with our great "Ladder" to heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:50-52). Let us not "tote" Jesus around and His doctrines as though they were museum pieces! Let us *utilize the glories of the Son and come unto the Father by Him!* Praise His name! Grow in Him; advance in Him. Peter, James, and John followed Jesus at His call; they did not merely set up a denomination which claimed the distinction of being called - the "Callites"! *Their calling was quite real, and it therefore moved them forward!* Has yours done the same for you? I am quite convinced that many of my acquaintances in the Churches have not learned a new truth or had an old one revitalized with larger perspective in 10 or 15 years. Such is certainly a reproach to our Lord who Himself, at a young age, "grew in wisdom" (Luke 2:52). The truth of God is totally unlike the theories of men! Men's theories may be plumbed, but God's truth and judgments and ways cannot; "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways PAST FINDING OUT" (Rom. 11:33). It is quite true that any statement that can be thoroughly comprehended can be replaced and superseded by a newer and fresher declaration. At the least, if not replaced, it will become monotonous and routine, and thus lose its effect upon its receivers. *But, God's truth is ever fresh, ever vital, ever ministering with pulsating life to its receivers, because it is from God, and has the traits and characteristics of God!* It is alive; the LIVING WORD! How many times it changes its appearance to me, and takes on larger and more widespread implication. Have you not experienced this in your own personal growth in grace and truth?

Many of our readers are weekly (and weakly) subjected to traditional religion. Messages are a mere rehash of old concepts and creeds, and are never nourishing to the soul! Multitudes of pastors have never preached a new sermon or new truth in years. Some evangelists with which I am personally acquainted have some twenty or twenty-five sermons which they use in their evangelistic efforts. They have never been altered or changed; never any new and pulsating life put into them; never any larger conceptions of the things of which they speak. *They have not grown, and those that are subjected to their ministry shall not grow - if so be that they depend upon such an insipid ministry.* As I receive and read some of the church papers and bulletins that come my way, my heart is grieved as I see preachers devoting whole pages to promotional enterprises; to the introduction of church officers; church contests; weather analyses; announcements of church activities; personal achievements, and other such "blabber"! *They have no burning message from God! No truth within that is bursting forth, no burning truth within.* They are dumb dogs, loving to slumber, lying down, that cannot bark! It is frightful to consider what the Lord shall do to such religious business men, whose god is their own belly! Not only have they themselves not grown, but they refuse obstinately to let anyone else grow! *All such pastors shall receive their just deserts from the Lord! But to the faithful we say: brethren, be not discouraged in your press for a higher and richer fellowship with the Lord! Let none impede your progress in the faith! Rather, GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!*

God is inherently and unchangeably righteous. Whatever He does is unalterably right, and we never dare question it because of our inability to discern the appearance of it. If we can see no other reason for His works being right; then let us take refuge in this truth; that because He does it, it is right, for God's works are altogether righteous. Take them as such.



## The Everlasting Gospel; The Center Of Redemption In Christ

The real Gospel is not as well known today as many seem to believe. Neither is the Gospel a secondary matter; a mere beginning doctrine, to be replaced in emphasis with matters more weighty and of greater significance. The Gospel is "everlasting" (Rev. 14:6); it shall always be **good**, and it shall always be **news!** There is a Divine element in the Gospel (all-Divine it is) which renders it inexhaustible, and consequently never to be discarded as obsolete or antiquated. How I love our heavenly Father for giving us such a Gospel; one that is so replete with meaning that we may be saved by continually keeping it in our memory (I Cor. 15:1-4). The subject of the Gospel is Jesus Christ; the object is man. The Perpetrator of the Gospel is God, the benefactor is man. **The "everlasting Gospel" is not a Gospel of demand, but one of accomplishment; not a declaration of requirement, but a heralding of provision.** It is the account of the Almighty God winning the love of His people through His only begotten Son, "full of grace and truth." Full expiation for sin - all sin; cleansing from all unrighteousness; the purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; the deliverance from vain tradition which held us captive - these are all integral parts of this glorious Gospel which we declare (I Cor. 15:3; I John 1:9; Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 18-19). The Gospel is not a declaration of man's righteousness, but a declaration of the "righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:26), for "therein (in the Gospel) is revealed the righteousness of God, from faith unto faith" (Rom. 1:17). He is now "**both** Just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). **The Gospel is not a system, it is a report of an accomplished reality!** Full atonement has been made; the Father has been thoroughly satisfied with the work of the Son, and is counting it as sufficient to cover the sins of all (Isaiah 53). The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ tells us how sin has been defeated **in Him**, and how that the very righteousness of God is imputed to us through faith. There has been a complete reversal of the curse - and added blessings besides. Praise the Lord!

Some well-meaning, but mistaken, sophist, has described the Gospel thusly: "Facts to be declared, commands to be obeyed, promises to be received." That sounds well; but it is not true! That is not the Gospel! **No apostle ever described that as the Gospel!** That is purely a human definition, and as such, is quite insufficient for the man who lives "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). **Men like to systematize the Gospel because then it may serve their own desires, and facilitate their own programs.** Were a thorough understanding of the Gospel granted to some, it would become altogether repulsive to them, because it is directed to individual hearts, and furthers no earthly programs or systems. Praise the Lord for such a gospel, that may not be exploited or used wrongfully when it is proclaimed in truth.

This Gospel is called "The Gospel of JESUS Christ" (Mark 1:1) because it speaks of a "Man" who has fulfilled the will of God **completely**, borne the iniquities of us all, died, raised, and ascended into glory where He sits at the right hand of God, making intercession for us (I Tim. 2:5-6). It is the good news relative to "Jesus of Nazareth"; pro-

claiming His accomplishments, and His alone, as sufficient for salvation. Hallelujah! This Gospel is also called "The Gospel of CHRIST" (Rom. 1:16) because it speaks of the anointed one, sent from the Father into the world. Our Savior was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), and was heralded by all of the prophets centuries before He actually came. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired diligently, **who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified BEFOREHAND the sufferings of CHRIST and the glory that should follow**" (I Pet. 1:10-11). **No gospel that eliminates the great eternal plan and purpose of God is true Gospel!** It is the good news of CHRIST; of the MESSIAH - the anointed one of God! **This Savior had and still has, the full blessing of the Father in heaven.** What a glorious Gospel, then, is this! That is why it is called "The GLORIOUS Gospel of Christ" (II Cor. 4:4); "glorious", because it reveals, and sheds forth light and illumination. **The true Gospel illuminates God and man. It reveals the true nature of God, and the true nature of man. It shows the love of God and the need of man. A Gospel that does not reveal is not a gospel at all!** It is good news to a poor sinner to hear what the Father is, and to know that man stands in desperate need of just such a Father. Praise the Lord! The Gospel is **personal**, called "The Gospel of YOUR salvation" (Eph. 1:13); i.e., **it is that message whereby the elect are awakened unto the provision of God.** God uses means to bring the sheep to Himself; they are called "by the Gospel" (II Thess. 2:14); that is the means of awakening them, and a most effective means it is! **Any Gospel that does not bring assurance of salvation, of full provision and expiation for my sin, is not a Gospel at all!** It does not declare a goal for which men strive, but an accomplished reality wherein is found full salvation. Glory to God! That is the everlasting Gospel of which we speak; it shall ever remain the same, for it is from all eternity. In this sense, the Gospel is the "Word of RECONCILIATION" (II Cor. 5:19); the good news concerning man being fused into God through the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:1-4).

**It does not emphasize the duties of men, but the provisions for men!** The Gospel does not merely set forth a systematic way of procuring salvation; but rather declares the reality of salvation, and the accomplishment of it in Jesus. It tells us that while no mere man could save men, God's own right arm brought Him salvation (Isa. 59:16; 63:5). God has accomplished what no man or flesh could do; "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; GOD, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Praise the Lord; **the Gospel speaks of what the Lord hath done.** It is a "report" (Isa. 53:1) of the doings of our God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Preacher, is that what you are preaching? Listener, is that what you are hearing? A reporter is someone who has seen and heard a genuine reality, and is conveying it to others. **The preaching of the Gospel consists of an individual who has spiritually beheld the Lord, and effectually heard the "truth as it is in Christ**

"Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21), reporting to others the good news of salvation through faith and by grace. It is the proclamation of free justification by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is the propitiation of God, who now is declared both the Just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:19-26). So far as righteousness is concerned, it is a declaration of the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16-17) which is the means through which we "obtain like precious faith" (II Pet. 1:1-2).

The Gospel is described in various ways by the Holy Spirit. So far as the fulfillment of it by the "man, Christ Jesus" it is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1). Because it pertains to the declaration of the coming of the prophesied Messiah, it is "The Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:1-2,16). Because the Gospel deals with the manifestation of God's glory, it is "the glorious Gospel of Christ" (II Cor. 4:4). The preaching of the Gospel consists primarily of the proclamation of a Person, and therefore it is referred to as "the preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 16:25). Within the Gospel are intricacies and spiritual depth which can by no means be plumbed by the finite mind. It is for this reason that we read of "the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). The Gospel, however, is personal; it deals with personal salvation, and with a personal Savior; therefore it is referred to as "the Gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13). What a glorious report is this; that man, in Christ, has been brought back to God and fully restored to fellowship - yea, a greater fellowship than has ever before been realized by created beings in heaven or in earth. Is it any wonder that we read of the "word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19)? Here is a message of life; a proclamation of deliverance. We declare freely that our Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the adversary and has made a show of him openly (Col. 2:15); praise the Lord! We are "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16), but greatly treasure it, and refuse to mitigate it!

Brethren, let me speak to you freely; this is a "plenteous redemption" of which I speak (Psa. 130:7-8). It knows no boundaries; none at all! "Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). **Free grace can thoroughly acquit any sinner who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus! That is Gospel!** It is not contingent upon works; but works are contingent upon grace! "We are His workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Redemption

### "THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION"

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, whereby we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Man by nature is alienated from God in his mind because of wicked works (Eph. 4:18). Having sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), man now has become "ungodly" (Rom. 5:6), i.e., totally unlike God, and in his own natural condition stands as God's enemy (Rom. 5:10; Js. 4:4). No man can claim the right to be called a "son of God" who has not, therefore, been

is "SENT" unto the people of God (Psa. 111:9); it is not procured by works, money, reputation, or fame! Blessed, indeed, are those that know the "joyful sound" (Psa. 89:15) of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! That "joyful sound" is the proclamation of "redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). It is the heralding of the glad message that Jesus has been made unto us, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). How wonderful to hear the good news that Christ Jesus has redeemed us from "ALL iniquity" (Titus 2:14) **from its power and dominion, as well as its guilt!** Praise the Lord! Herein is declared how the Lord Jesus gave His life "a ransom for many, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:6). Praise God for the "due time", not only insofar as His death is concerned, but also in connection with our own apprehension of the truth of it by faith! Think of redemption; we have been redeemed with the blood of Christ "from the vain tradition received from our fathers" (I Pet. 1:18-19); we are no more bound by mere traditional concepts, but have a clear and perceptive appreciation of eternal things. Hallelujah! Such a redemption may be joyfully received, because it is an "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12); there is nothing temporary or incomplete about it!

Such a message as this never loses its luster to me! This is that Gospel by which we shall be saved "if we keep it in memory" (I Cor. 15:1-4). **Meditation upon it will bring great joy, and victory over the adversary.** Satan does not like to hear the Gospel preached; he will do all within his power to squelch its proclamation. He will substitute the doctrine of meritorious works; the sundry activities into which men may be thrown and forget the Gospel; and what he terms "deeper things" with which people may occupy themselves and their minds. **Beware of anything and everything that detracts from this glorious Gospel.** Everything centers around this! When Paul sought to strengthen and confirm the followers of Jesus, He always preached redemption in Christ Jesus. He never left this central message out of any of His writings (see Romans 1:16-15; 5:1-20; I Cor. 5:7-8; 6:9-20; II Cor. 5:14-17; Gal. 3:9-13; Eph. 1:6-11; Phil. 2:1-11; Col. 1:10-22; I Thess. 4:14, etc.). **Make the Gospel the center of your life, of your thoughts, of your conversation.** See that Jesus is always beheld as He who bore the penalty for your sins. This is the center of redemption! Methinks, that the growing redeemed ones can see it, too.

"born again" (John 3:3-5). It takes authority - spiritual power and acclamation - to become God's son; "But to as many as received Him (Jesus) gave He POWER to BECOME the sons of God, even to those that believe on His name" (John 1:12). This means that men are NOT sons of God until they have received, or believed in the name of, the Lord Jesus Christ. The devilish doctrine that declares that God is our common father, and that we are all brothers, is a perpetration of the Devil. **We are not all brothers;** some are wheat, and some are tares; some are sheep, and some are goats; some are the children of God, and some are the children of the wicked one! **We are not all God's children; that is to say, all men are not the children of God. Rather, only those**



that are possessed of the "faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1-3) are such. Unto them alone it is declared: "But ye are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:26). Praise the Lord! There are some that are appropriately termed "the children of the devil" (I John 3:10; Acts 13:10). Again it is witnessed by the Holy Spirit; "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God" (Rom. 9:8)! God will not accept man in his natural state, for he is "by NATURE, a child of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). He must be brought into a new family, a new order of things. "Old things" must "pass away" and "all things become new" (II Cor. 5:17) before there can be any true relationship to the Lord God! If such be the case, I will, by the grace of God, be brought to a higher realm in Christ Jesus where my thoughts, motivation, and ambitions are completely new. The whole transaction, of course, is of the Lord! We are, inherently (apart from Jesus) God's enemies; we have no desire for Him (Rom. 3:11b); we do not understand (Rom. 3:10a); we are "gone out of the way" (Rom. 3:12), and possess "no fear of God" (Rom. 3:18). As natural men, we cannot receive the things of God (I Cor. 2:14), for they are sheer foolishness to us apart from the Lord Jesus. Aptly described are all natural men by the Lord when He says: "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, HAVING NO HOPE, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

Our lives, before being "drawn" (John 6:44) were characterized by deadness (Eph. 2:1), darkness (Eph. 5:8), enmity in our minds (Col. 1:21), wandering (I Pet. 2:25), foolishness, disobedience, deception, service toward our lusts and pleasures, hate (Titus 3:3), and a yielding of our members to uncleanness (Rom. 6:19). We had no wherewithal to respond to God; nothing but a will that fought against His judgments. If God did not take the INITIATIVE in such a state, none would have ever come to Him! Man is not like God since the fall - he literally fell "short of the glory of God", and apart from the salvation that is in Christ with eternal glory, he is in a continual state of retrogression! Now, it is said of men; "They LIKE MEN have transgressed the covenant; they have dealt treacherously with me" (Hosea 6:7). Observe, the Lord did not identify their actions merely with the Devil! He said that they were characteristic of MEN! Isaiah thunders still; "ALL WE like sheep have gone astray; we have turned EVERY ONE to HIS OWN WAY" (Isa. 53:6). Yet, praise the Lord, "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" has broken through this despicable situation, and "His own arm" has brought unto us salvation (Isa. 59:16; 63:5). He has taken us unto Himself and adopted us into the Divine family through the Lord Jesus Christ. As it is witnessed; "The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people" (Deut. 26:18). That is adoption! He has taken us out of darkness, and "translated us into the kingdom of His Dear Son" (Col. 1:13). It is the fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy; "It shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are NOT my people, there it shall be said unto them, YE ARE the sons of the living God" Hosea 1:10; Rom. 9:25-26). Hallelujah!

It was our "Precious" Lord (I Pet. 2:7) who made the adoption a reality. It was NOT "works

of righteousness which we have done", but "according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). As it is written, "In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the curse of the Law, that we might RECEIVE the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). Notice that adoption is something RECEIVED; not a thing deserved or earned! Such a glorious thing it is to RECEIVE the adoption of sons; to be given the gift of sonship; the grant of inclusion into the very family of God; yea, into the Lord Himself, for He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). The reality of this inclusion (by grace) into the "whole family in heaven and earth" which is named after Christ (Eph. 3:15) is attested by the Holy Spirit; "Ye have RECEIVED the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we ARE the sons of God" (Rom. 8:15-16). If we think that we have ourselves moved the Lord to adopt us, the Spirit declares; "(God) having PREDESTINATED us unto the adoption of children BY Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph. 1:5). Constrained by His own will, the Lord "MADE us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Eliminate Jesus Christ, and you have eliminated adoption; eliminate adoption, and there can be NO "sons of God" (I John 3:1).

The word "adopt" literally means "TO CHOOSE; to take by choice into some relationship; to take voluntarily as one's own child." The emphasis in adoption is the choice of God, not the choice of man! Even in the mundane pursuits of life, the word "adopt" is used in a unilateral way. It is to be understood that when something is adopted, it was adopted purely at the prerogative of the one doing the adopting. There was no conferring with the plan to be adopted; no counsel with the infant adopted. It is even more true of our Heavenly Father. He conferred with none but Himself when He chose His sons, and none may gainsay it. Either God is the Author of salvation, or man is. Our choice in the matter is constrained by God's choice, just as surely as our love is constrained by His love (I John 4:19). It is God that adopts, not men! To hear some of the modern sophists speak of salvation, you would think that it was a matter of God being adopted by men; it is not so! God adopted us by His grace, and the selection was made "in Christ" "before the foundation of the world." As Jesus declared to His disciples, to correct their misapprehensions; "Ye have NOT chosen me, but I have chosen you." (John 15:19). While some object quite vehemently to this truth, I will personally rejoice in it, and give thanks to my God for being great enough to do "all things" (II Cor. 5:18-20). Yea, it is true, as the Holy Spirit witnesses; "For ALL THINGS are of Him, and through Him, and to Him" (Rom. 11:36), and again; "ALL THINGS are of God, who hath reconciled us unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:18). While others make their boast in man's choice, I will make my boast in the Lord who has chosen! I will uphold the right of His FREE-WILL, and not that of man! Unashamedly will I assert with holy men of old that men are free only in the Son; that only Jesus can make men free; "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:32-36). It is the "truth" that makes

“free”; praise the Lord! **One aspect of our nature that desperately needs to be freed by Christ, is our will!** How can blind leaders assert so confidently that men possess free will, when God positively asserts that men are “servants of sin” (Rom. 6:17); that they are bound by the chains of darkness, and have gone after their own sins! As that beloved Martin Luther wrote in one of his hymns; “free will against God’s judgment fought.” Defend it if you will; but you shall only have to grovel in the dust, and bow the knee to Him that turns even the king’s heart “whithersoever He will” (Prov. 21:1).

If such be not the case, then there can be no such thing as “adoption”; for adoption postulates a state that absolutely requires outside help. The condition is such as finds the individual divorced from good. **There is no solution to this situation apart from the Sovereign grace of God.** It is God that finds us, even as He did Israel, in our own blood; forsaken by all, and dying. It is He that looks upon us and cries; “LIVE” (Ezek. 16:6). What part had Lazarus in his resurrection? What part had John the Baptist, Isaac, Jacob, and other holy men in their birth? What part had Isaiah in his vision of the Lord high and lifted up? What part had Israel in their choosing of the Lord? Where was their “free-will”? What part had David in becoming king of Israel? What part had Saul? Solomon? Josiah? What part did the Apostles have in their choice by the Lord? Were they not selected of the Lord; and **was not their holiness and righteous demeanor of life governed by the choice of the Lord!** Did ever a man live holy before the Lord had dealt with him? Did ever a man claim a right to sonship before the Lord God of heaven and earth had “set His love” upon him? Glory to God, in the adoption we see the great-

## A VAIN ATTEMPT

“Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psa. 2:3).

This text refers to the attempt of the world to rid itself of godly influence. It had its greatest fulfillment in the attempt of men to destroy Jesus, as it is witnessed in Acts 4. But, let none be frightened by those worldly resolves, no matter how firm they may seem to be, for they are vain! Though they “gathered together against” Jesus, yet were their personal plans overturned in favor of the counsel, and determination of the Lord God of heaven and earth. In view of this great triumph, Jesus declared: “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; **I have overcome the world**” (Jno. 16:33). This is designed to comfort the people of God; to show them that the world is not stronger than its Creator; that “he that is in them is greater than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4). Our Lord Jesus confirmed to us the truth that “there are many devices in the heart of man, but **the counsel of the Lord shall stand**” (Prov. 19:21). The attempts to smear character, obliterate influence, and destroy labors - these are all attempts of the world to break the bands of the righteous asunder, like the green withes with which Samson was bound. But the world shall find that they cannot break our bands asunder! **The influence of the people of God is**

ness of our God; the selection and choice of our God. How comforting a doctrine is this! It means that Jesus is the “AUTHOR and the FINISHER of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). Praise the Lord!

Our adoption is intricately tied in with the Holy Spirit. He is that “Spirit of adoption”! **Not only is adoption a revelation of God’s election, but it may only be accomplished through the imparting of the Holy Spirit.** Those who possess not the Spirit of Christ are none of His (Rom. 8:9). **It is the presence of the nature of God that renders us sons of God!** No man “taketh this honor unto himself!” The Holy Spirit is reserved, insofar as a possession is concerned, for the “sons of God”; “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth His Spirit into our hearts crying Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). (Those who deny the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, deny the adoption; and those that deny the adoption deny salvation; and those that deny salvation have made God a liar, and the truth is not in them!) It is in the coming day that we shall receive the “adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23), and there we have a good commentary upon the nature of adoption. Our adoption shall be, so to speak, perfected in the day when we are raised from the dead incorruptible. **That shall be the final manifestation of the sons of God in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation.** What will we have to do with that final display to the reprobate? Which of us shall have raised himself? Which shall change his own body? Which shall determine the time of his resurrection? Which shall choose the place of his resurrection? Who shall choose to be raised or to be changed? Ah, brethren beloved, so it is with every aspect of your adoption! **It is all of God from beginning to end.** Glory in it, and may the Lord be praised by one and all!

**too mighty to be snapped by human strength;** The righteous shall continue to “shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” (Phil. 2:15). The righteous have been “planted” (Isa. 61:3) here by the Lord, and they shall remain until their appointed time - praise the Lord! Hardship and affliction they may have, **but final defeat they shall not!** “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth forever” (I John 2:15-17). If the wicked take our lives, our works shall follow after us, and goad them even as Stephen’s did goad Saul of Tarsus after his homegoing!

It is a source of wonderment to many saints of youth that the world is so anxious to rid themselves of the righteous. Our text affords us an explanation of that situation. It is because the presence of the saints brings “bands” and “cords” to the wicked. The unrighteous are restrained and hampered by God’s people. They cannot operate freely with them around. The saints are the salt of the earth, and not only are the source of its preservation, but also of its soreness and smarting while they sin! Flesh simply cannot assert itself as fully when the Lord’s people, possessed by the Spirit of the Lord, are around. There is a certain discomfit and uneasiness had by those that know not the Lord when His people are around! Praise the Lord. Though the most heinous wickedness may break forth in your presence, yet in Christ there are “bands and cords” binding the unbelievers before you. **The influence of the godly is**



truly felt, although it may not often be confessed. Make full use of this weapon, holy brethren. Live in that precious communion with the Lord to which we are exhorted by the Holy Ghost (Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 6:1; Col. 3:1-3; Eph. 5:18; Col. 2:16-17; II Pet. 1:5-10, etc.) See if your fellowship with the Lord will not bring about a discomfiting of the foe; an uneasiness among the ungodly. You need not be an eloquent speaker; the Lord shall testify through whatever words you say, and through your general demeanor of life. "Let your moderation be known unto all men", is the exhortation (Phil. 4:5). Did not our Lord leave us with this commission; "Let **your light** so shine before men that they may see **your good works**, and glorify **your Father** which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The light within is not to be smothered with selfishness or with the fear of man, which "bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25). The Holy Spirit is often "quenched" and "grieved" (I Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30) in the hearts and lives of disciples because of fear, shame, neglect, sloth, indifference, unlawful communication with the world, and a failure to press onward to perfection. Men do not think of setting a candle under a bushel, or of hiding a light-bulb under a box; and yet men - foolish as they are - attempt such ignorance while professing privately allegiance to Christ. And, what sort of salt and light are they? Do they pose a threat to the kingdom of the Devil? Are they a source of discomfort to the wicked? No! The world has no objections at all to their presence, because they are not living unto the Lord. Ah, brethren, let us "walk in the light as He is in the light", not attempting to mitigate the power of the Holy Spirit by living in the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.

As you live unto the Lord, you have the full assurance that nothing will be able to separate you from Him (Rom. 8:30-39). Your bands are strengthened in Him, and your cords are drawn tight about the necks of the reprobate! **They cannot escape the judgment of your life, of your words and of your actions!** You are an epistle "read of all men" (II Cor. 3:1-4). Praise the Lord! Is the world more powerful than the Lord who created it? Why, then, ought you to fear to boldly stand for Him, and "having **done** all, to stand" (Eph. 6:12-18)? Be not as those early believers who did believe in Jesus, but did not openly profess Him because of the fear of the people: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; **FOR THEY LOVED THE PRAISE OF MEN MORE THAN THE PRAISE OF GOD**" (John 12:42-43). Aye, and legion is the name of those that follow in their train! They dare not be "cords" and "bands" to the wicked, but choose to make them comfortable, and lead what they believe to be a quiet and peaceable life! How many members of local congregations that are dead, have been made to realize that an open profession of the faith "once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) would incur the indignation of their particular denomination; and thus they speak not? **Many a "preacher" there is who knows more of the truth than he speaks; fearing to own his Lord before all, because he has more respect speak not? Many a "preacher" there is who knows God of heaven and earth.** There are multitudes

of such men and women. And, of what good are they? Where is their saltiness? And if they lose their savor, wherewith shall they be salted again? Are you such an one? Is your appetite for the deeper things of the Spirit of God? for a closer walk with the Lord? for a deeper fellowship in the mystery? Do you not know that such attitudes not only form bands and cords to the world, but also to many a church? Have you not felt the fierce opposition against the "pressing" that you seek? Why do you wait to assert yourself? Shake yourself like Samson, and see the mighty power of God cause you to stand in the midst of the most dreadful opposition.

Be a binder! One that binds the wicked! Seek to live above the world; above sin, and above that area of life wherein the lusts of the flesh are fulfilled. Let he world feel the mighty power of God in you! Let them see the great and exceeding light of God in you! Their attempts to blow out your light, and to bind your strength shall be futile! They are all VAIN ATTEMPTS!

## CHRIST, THE DIVIDER

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather **DIVISION**"  
(Luke 12:51)

Our Lord Jesus both unites and divides. He unites the sheep, and divides the sheep from the goats. It is imperative that God's people become reconciled to the truth of Christ's dividing ministry, lest they become "as the horse or the mule" (Psa. 32:9). Our Lord has come to "take **OUT** a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14), to prepare a Bride for Himself, that she may ever be with Him. **Part of that preparation is separation**, in which you become accustomed to holy company. Having totally refined the appetite of His people, the Lord adjures them to "be not deceived; evil communications (relationships) corrupt good manners (morals, or way of life)" (I Cor. 15:33). The saints of God are of another order; their "conversation (manner of life) is in heaven, from whence they look for their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change their vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21). They are "not of the world", but are "of God", while the "whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Their affection is "set on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-3). Spiritually, they have been removed from this world order; "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13), and placed into "heavenly places" (Eph. 2:6). There has been a **DIVISION** between them and the world, and all that is of the world! They have embraced the truth, and the world has not; they have received the Lord, and the world has not; they have beheld themselves as they really are, and the world has not! A great gulf has been formed between the world and the saints which can by no means be bridged! In affection, motive, thought, word, deed, aspiration, goal, and appetite, the saved man is divided from the unregenerated man! This division is real; it is not merely a theological dogma of some sort; it is something to be experienced, not a thing to be conversed about alone! Oh, that more were aware of this great division.

The world is dead, the saints are alive; the world lieth in wickedness, the saints possess true righteousness; the world is lost, the saints are saved; the world hates God, the saints love God; the world denies Christ, the saints confess Him; the world has no appetite for the Word of God, the saints live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; the world counts Christians' the offscouring and filth of the world, the saints consider them beloved brethren. **Praise the Lord for this glorious division!** It is truly a preparation for the day when we shall "ever be with the Lord."

Now, the division of which Jesus speaks in our text is a manifestation of that inward division - the outworking, so to speak, of it. This is clearly evidenced in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, our Savior. As is testified in the Scripture; "So there was a division among the people because of Him" (John 7:43); "And there was a division among them" (John 9:16); "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings" (John 10:16). **The division was real, not merely external; and it was effectual, not merely internal!** The reality of this is declared by our Lord Himself; "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be those of his own house" (Matt. 10:35-36). Now, the declaration of the Lord is plain enough; it cannot be gainsayed! Christ's fundamental ministry, of course, is not division; but **division is the inevitable outcome of His ministry**, and that is what He means by these words. It is as though He said; "He that will believe on me shall find himself at variance with his very loved ones; and if he thinks that he will minimize that division, let him know that my purpose in his particular case is to accomplish such a division." Again, we are thrown upon the will of the Lord; caused to rest in His good pleasure. There must be a reconciliation to this truth; a refusal to ignore its truth! Jesus will not deny Himself (II Tim. 2:13). He will not fail to do what He has said! You may well be heartsick because of the division, and because of family-foes; but **see to it that you attempt no reconciliation in the flesh with them!** If you do so, you shall forfeit the fellowship of the Lord!

The division will be a sharp one! There will be nothing casual or polite about it. Such words as "VARIANCE", "FOES", and "DIVISION" indicate the presence of heartache, tears, rebellion, war, opposition, denial, and hate! They by no means convey thoughts of pleasure and unity, but rather of suffering and rejection! The nature of the division is seen in the enmity which Christ's kinsmen had against Him (John 1:11). They refused Him, and cast Him from their presence, choosing to crucify Him. He was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:), not esteemed nor pitied; and so it is with His people! Our Lord Jesus draws a sharp and perceptible line of division between the saved and the unsaved, and that division shall surely be felt by all who participate in it. It is imperative that they war not against it, and so be found warring against the purpose of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A refusal to receive this word "with meekness" (James 1:21) will be attended by much unnecessary sorrow. If you insist upon uniting what the

Lord has divided, you are at variance with the Lord, and warring against His immutable purposes. And do you think you shall prevail in such a battle? How many I know that have stubbornly refused to accept the dividing ministry of Jesus Christ! Their lives are marked by indecision, heartache, and neglect, because they have chosen the company of the damned rather than bow the knee to the Lord and confess His authority. Attempts are made to resolve family differences by the saint leaving Christ out of the conversation, showing neglect in spiritual fellowship, etc. And what of Christ's dividing ministry? Has He denied Himself? Oh, that Satan would cease to blind men's eyes to this! God shall surely whet His sword against all who refuse to "obey the truth".

**Separation is the result of division!** When we are called upon to "separate" ourselves (II Cor. 6:17) and to "come out from among them", the Lord is pronouncing that the work of salvation is to be **evidenced** in your life; **that it's evidence is to be in full harmony with its reality.** We have been saved and delivered from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4), and our conversation (manner of living) is to emanate the fundamental truth. That fact that some relations of yours are out of the Lord, and unsympathetic with the faith, and engaged in refusing truth from your lips, gives you all the more reason to let the sword of division fall between you. You are not of the same world; not of the same appetites; not of the same love - why should you, then, attempt to nourish any identification with them? **Family relations are more liable to detract you from the Lord (if so be that they are unregenerate), than anyone else, because they have access to your affection and connubial love, which are most excellent vehicles for the furtherance of Satan's heinous purposes.** Methinks that all should seek grace in this area that are confronted with the problems of foes within their own household. We are not so foolish as to say that such a situation is pleasant, or that it is to be relished with great joy. God forbid! But it cannot be avoided! **If you are going to live unto the Lord, then you shall surely experience division from those that are not living unto the Lord.** Do not shun it or avoid it! In glory, we shall forever be "with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16) and away from those that "know not the Lord nor obey the Gospel." In your labors in fervent prayer for them, be not slack; but **in your association with them, be wise as serpents!** Rest assured that the Lord Himself shall more than abundantly make up for any loss of association with the ungodly by an intimate fellowship with you. This is to be desired above all the fellowship that this earth has to offer, whether on a family or a more full social level. **Communication with Him, His love, His encouragements and instructions, are of infinitely greater value than those mundane relationships of flesh and blood, and they are to be maintained at all expense; even if it involve the sword of division within your own family.** Receive ye the word of the Lord!