

Declaration of Faith

UNIT THREE

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL

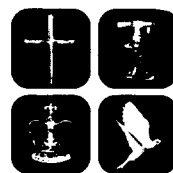


Declaration of Faith

UNIT THREE

Condensed
from the
original,
two-year
teaching
series

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DECLARATION OF FAITH

One of four units of study condensed from the original, two-year teaching series copyrighted 1949, 1950 by International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

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THE VISION: A MESSAGE KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD

by Aimee Semple McPherson

One particular night, in the midst of the Oakland revival, God led me to speak on the prophet Ezekiel's vision, as recorded in the Book of Ezekiel, the first chapter, the fourth to tenth verses. Verse ten was dwelt upon at great length, as the Spirit spoke through me in revealing power. It reads:

"As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

Approximately 8,000 people filled the huge tent and hundreds more crowded around the edges where the side walls were rolled up. People leaned forward in expectancy as God poured the message forth from my innermost being.

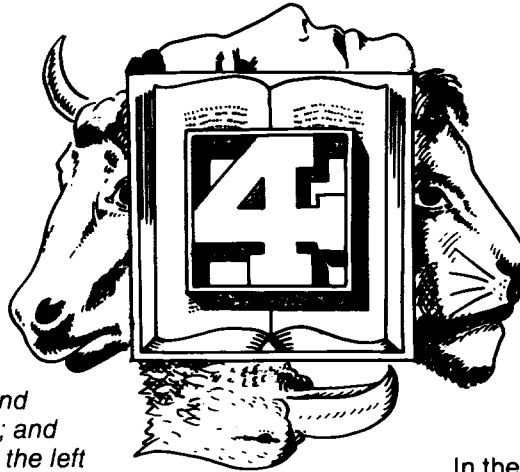
My own soul was awed as the Spirit painted in word-pictures the glorious account of that which Ezekiel saw.

IN THE CLOUDS of heaven the prophet had beheld "a whirlwind, a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself, and a brightness." Out of this phenomenon "came the likeness of four living creatures," moving back and forth across the skies with "the appearances of a flash of lightning."

Above the firmament that was over their heads, Ezekiel saw "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon this throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it." From his loins upward, and from his loins downward, he was clothed in the brightness of fire and round about the throne there was a rainbow!

This, explains Ezekiel, "was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." So wonderful, so magnificent was the revelation, that the prophet could only repeat, "it was the appearance of the likeness of" some thing!

As I spoke, God revealed to the assembled multitude that the four faces typified the four-fold ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.



In the face of the *MAN* we beheld that of the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" — the Saviour of the world!

In the face of the *LION* we beheld that of the mighty Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and fire; Jesus is the "lion of the tribe of Judah." As a lion denotes strength and power, it is a fitting symbol for Christ as the Giver of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the *OX* we beheld the Great Burden Bearer, who "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Jesus is the Great Physician and the Healer of our bodies.

In the face of the *EAGLE* we saw reflected a vision of the coming King of kings, whose pinions would soon cleave the shining heavens as He returns to catch His waiting bride away!

A PERFECT GOSPEL! A complete gospel for body, for soul, for spirit, and for eternity! A gospel that faces squarely in every direction!

As the wonder — the power — the majesty of it cascaded o'er the battlements of glory, filling, flooding, enveloping my very being, the whole tent seemed enveloped as well — aquiver with the praise of God!

I stood there still and listened, gripping the pulpit, shaking with the wonder and the joy of it, then —

"WHY" — why, it's the F-O-U-R-S-Q-U-A-R-E Gospel!" burst from the white heat of my heart.

Instantly the Spirit bore witness! Waves, billows, oceans of praise rocked the audience.

Borne aloft upon the wings of a Holy Ghost revival, the term "The Foursquare Gospel," which the Lord gave to me that night as vividly distinguishing the message which He had given me to preach, has become known around the world.

INTRODUCTION

The condensed Declaration of Faith is designed to meet the educational needs of the growing, progressive church and individual. Its distinct purpose is to provide a strong, Biblical foundation as well as a solid framework of Foursquare beliefs and doctrines in a course-study format. This format facilitates the learning/growth process by means of personal application to ensure effective, spiritual advancement.

The course is comprised of four units containing thirteen (13) lessons each. The lessons revolve around a central theme which is clearly stated under the lesson *AIM*, and which focuses on the basic directive for that particular study.

Needless to say, Scripture is a very important part of the course. *KEY VERSES* have been purposefully provided as a foundational basis from which each lesson's text obtains its footing. Throughout the course many other Bible references are listed with the intent of adding a fuller, Scriptural documentation, and of providing materials for a secure, learning structure. Thus, research and careful examination of these references will prove to be rewarding.

Inserts entitled, *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* are woven into the tapestry of the lesson plan. They are a means of stimulating class discussion in a group study; provoking constructive, individual thought; and channeling the attention of the student(s) into the mainstream of the section immediately following it. Accompanying each note is a question(s) or instruction which is answered or discussed in the ensuing text.

The *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES* are helpful application assists designed to highlight, solidify and emphasize the Bible truth being presented. They can be done in small groups or individually. The *OPENING ACTIVITY* should be completed in the classroom if the course is being used in a group study, and the *CLOSING ACTIVITY* can be done either in the classroom or at home the week following.

Each lesson is finally capped with a series of questions referred to as a *WORKSHEET*. This sheet can be used as a review for group evaluation, or as a "self-check" if the course is being studied independently.

All will find the condensed Declaration of Faith to be highly palatable in its reading and flexible in its use. Following are a few suggested means for most effectively utilizing this material.

Group-Study Options Include:

1. Class discussion — The instructor conducts the actual classtime in a discussion atmosphere, using the lesson as an outline. In this case, the instructor may wish to devise more questions than those listed in the *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* section. Students should read the lesson during the week prior to class.
2. Lecture — The classtime may be primarily lecture, allowing prescribed time for questions and some discussion as needed throughout the teaching. In this case, the student may read through the lesson the week following class as a review.

If the instructor is the only one using a book, the students should be encouraged to take notes. It is helpful to have an outline of the lesson charted on a blackboard or an overhead projector. The worksheets placed at the end of each lesson may be photocopied for the class. The same applies to puzzles or lists of questions included in the *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES*. It is also suggested that the title, *AIM*, and *KEY VERSE* of the study be posted for all to see.

In a group situation, it is recommended that the instructor involve the class in the *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES*, guide the students in thoroughly examining the Scripture references, and become skillfully acquainted with all of the material.

Not only is this book a valuable tool for group study, but it is also an indispensable "must" for the individual endeavoring to explore God's Word, and better understand specific Foursquare doctrine.

Individual-Study Format Involves:

1. Setting a goal for the completion of the course — preferably one lesson per week.
2. Reading the lesson *AIM*, looking up the *KEY VERSE* in the Bible, and meditating on the Scripture and its meaning.
3. Completing the *OPENING ACTIVITY* and observing the special directions for individual study.
4. Studying the lesson, and making notes on important aspects of the subject matter.
5. Considering the question(s) or instruction listed

under *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* in view of finding the answer(s) in the material immediately following it.

6. Working through the *CLOSING ACTIVITY*, and finishing the *WORKSHEET*, either at the same time or a few days later.

Although the means of approach pursued in this course may differ in varying circumstances, the final outcome

will be the same — a common advancement in the strength and knowledge of the Word of God.

A world of adventure waits to be discovered by the one who sets out to journey through the annals of Biblical wealth. This Declaration of Faith will prove to be a faithful guide coursing a pathway enriched with the fruits of Life, bedecked with revelation of the King, Jesus, and canopied with a fresh vision of His Majesty.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part 1

AIM: To define the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to thus understand its twofold purpose. One is that the Christian may receive power in his life for special service. The other has to do with an enhanced realization and appreciation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. We will also explore the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

KEY VERSES:

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16,17).

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost...But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and 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 1:5, 8).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Before beginning this lesson ask your class to write down what they believe to be a definition of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, using whatever knowledge they may already have on the subject and/or by exploring the Scriptures.

If you are working alone, write your answer on the back of the worksheet at the end of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

"We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the incoming of the promised Comforter in mighty and glorious fulness to endue the believer with power from on high; to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus; to give inspired utterance in witnessing of Him; to foster the spirit of prayer, holiness, sobriety; to equip the individual and the Church for practical, efficient, joyous, Spirit-filled soul-winning in the fields of life; and that this being still the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same manner as that in which He came upon Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days and as recorded in the Word, that it may be truly said of us as of the house of Cornelius: *the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning.*" — *Declaration of Faith, Aimee Semple McPherson*

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What relation has the baptism with the Spirit to the Foursquare Gospel?*

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the second of the four cardinal truths upon which the Foursquare Gospel is founded - Jesus Christ the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. It is of the most vital importance in connection with the spiritual life and service of every believer. The

baptism with the Holy Spirit is the secret of the Church's power. It is the great need in every sphere of Christian activity, that the message of salvation might be proclaimed with the divine unction which alone can insure its success. In the following lessons we shall seek to discover the outstanding teachings of the Scriptures with regard to this mighty experience.

WHAT IS THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST?

The Name of the Experience

It is not "The Second Definite Work of Grace"

This is an expression used nowhere in the Bible though we hear it a great deal in certain religious circles. We would not say that we did not believe in a second work of grace, for we are anxious to receive all that God has for us: but if we need a second work of grace we believe also in a third, fourth, fifth, etc. In other words, we do believe in a continual growth in grace (2 Peter 3:18). This, however, does not describe the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

It is not "The Second Blessing"

Here, again, is an expression not used in Scripture. Undoubtedly God has a second, and many another, blessings for His children, but to call a definite, spiritual experience by this name is not biblical. Get every blessing you can from God but realize that the name, "Second Blessing," is not what God calls the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

It is not "Sanctification"

"Sanctification" is the scriptural name for something quite different from the baptism with the Holy Ghost. We have studied that term and its scriptural application in former lessons.

It is not "Holiness"

Holiness is a scriptural word, but it describes an attribute of character rather than an experience. It is developed rather than received as a gift or a single blessing.

It is "The Baptism with the Holy Ghost"

This is the scriptural name for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the lives of Christian men and women... "*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*" (Matthew 3:11). "*I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*" (Mark 1:8). "*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*" (Acts 1:5).

What This Experience Is

Negatively

It is not the new birth. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is subsequent to and distinct from His regenerative work. A full Christian experience should certainly include both, but we must make this distinction because many are genuinely saved who have never been filled with the Spirit. The following facts definitely prove this:

1) The apostles were converted under the ministry of Jesus (John 1:35-50; 13:10,11; 15:3; Luke 10:20). They were filled with the Holy Ghost at least two years later (See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:13,14; 2:1-4).

2) The Samaritans were saved under the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-12). They were baptized with the Holy Ghost under the ministry of Peter and John some days later (Acts 8:14-17).

3) Paul was converted on the road to Damascus by a personal vision of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:3-9). He was baptized with the Holy Ghost under the ministry of Ananias three days later (Acts 9:17-19).

4) The twelve men at Ephesus were "believers," according to Paul's own words to them: "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*" (Acts 19:2). They were baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus and later received the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 19:2-7).

It is not sanctification. Sanctification is a manifestation of God's grace entirely different from the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The two augment each other, but are vitally different in character and purpose. Sanctification has to do with separation to God and purification for His service.

It is twofold:

1) Instantaneous (John 15:3 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10-14). This phase of the subject refers particularly to the believer's standing in Christ.

2) Progressive (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 6:1; 12:14). This refers to the daily process by which the believer's actual condition is brought up to his standing.

It is not a reward for years of faithful service, nor is it the zenith of Christian experience.

This should be clearly understood, for many have adopted the idea that to have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit marks them as superior in spirituality and worthy of some special dispensation from God. Believers were taught to expect it immediately after conversion and water baptism. "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38).

The baptism with the Spirit is not something to have, but something to use. It is not the height of Christian experience, but only one of the tremendously essential foundations for further development and service.

There are those who teach that the Holy Ghost was poured out once and for all on the Day of Pentecost and we need expect no further experience of this kind, either individually or collectively.

Note, however, that Peter, in quoting Joel 2:29, did not say, "Now is fulfilled that which was spoken by Joel." If he had, we would say there would be nothing more to expect, but what he did say was, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" — This is what Joel was talking about — leaving us to expect further similar manifestations. (Note the wording used in Scripture when a prophecy is finally fulfilled — Matthew 21:4,5; 27:35.) Pentecost was not the fulfilling of Joel's prophecy but only a foretaste of the complete fulfillment. There have been many such since. The full consummation is still in the future when all the accompanying signs will attend (Joel 2:30,31).

Furthermore, the above mentioned position is untenable because the book of Acts records at least four other occasions when the Holy Spirit was poured out after the Day of Pentecost (Acts 8:14-17; 9:17; 10:44-46; 19:2-7).

The baptism with the Holy Ghost was given once and for all, as far as the Church in general is concerned, at Pentecost. The gift of eternal life was offered once and for all at Calvary. But to suggest that every believer is filled with the Spirit is just like asserting that every creature is saved for eternity. There must be a definite, individual acceptance and experience of each.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What is the "baptism with the Holy Spirit"?

Positively

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is a definite experience, subsequent to salvation, whereby the Third Person of the Godhead comes upon the believer to anoint and energize him for special service. This experience is designated in the New Testament as the Spirit falling upon, coming upon, being poured out upon and filling the heart of the yielded believer in a sudden and supernatural manner.

The Promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; John 14:26; Acts 1:4) This expression is of great encouragement to the seeking heart, for the Father is able to fulfill His promise. Sometimes we make promises we cannot keep. He is able and faithful to keep what He has promised.

The gift of the Father and the Son (John 14:16; 15:26; Acts 2:38; 5:32). If the baptism with the Holy Ghost is a gift, then it is free and cannot be worked for, merited or deserved in any measure. We do not receive the Spirit as a reward for hours of prayer or because of deep sacrifices made. He comes as the free gift of God's grace. Receive Him freely.

The command of the Lord (Acts 1:4; 5:32; Ephesians 5:18). The matter of receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost is not left to the individual's whim or fancy. Here is a strict command of the Lord and each one has a responsibility to obey. Failure to be filled with the Spirit constitutes disobedience.

The Description of the Pentecostal Blessing

"Promise of the Father" — Prophetic aspect
(See Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49; Isaiah 44:4; Joel 2:28-29; John 14:6.)

"Baptism with the Holy Spirit" — Initial reception
(See Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5.)

"Fullness of the Spirit" — Permanent expression
(See Ephesians 5:18 and Acts 6:5.)

"Anointing of the Spirit" — Empowerment for special acts of service
(See Luke 4:18 and 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.)

THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What will one receive who has the Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit as the Empowerer

The great purpose of the baptism with the Holy Ghost is that the believer may have power in his life. Jesus promised, "*Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy*

Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The need of power in his personal life is felt by every Christian, and it is a glorious thing to know that God has made ample provision for just that need.

Power in the Personal Life

Each Christian needs a power that is greater than anything he possesses, naturally, if he is going to overcome the temptations and lusts of the flesh and wage a successful warfare against Satan. It is significant that in the first seven chapters of Romans the Holy Ghost is mentioned just once (5:5). Notice the struggle that is described in the seventh chapter which ends with the heart-rending cry, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Romans 7:24). But what a glorious difference we find the moment we step over into the eighth chapter (See Romans 8:2-4)! In this eighth chapter, the Holy Spirit is mentioned no less than 19 times, and the chapter ends in glorious eternal victory. The secret of spiritual victory is through the power of the Holy Ghost. "*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*" (Galatians 5:16). It is just not possible to be an overcomer without the power of the Spirit (See Galatians 5:17). God has a task for each to perform and a witness for each to give. We cannot do these faithfully nor successfully without the power of the Spirit which He has provided for us. Jesus commanded and the Word of God exhorts us to be filled with the Spirit (See Acts 1:4,5 and Ephesians 5:18).

Power for Spiritual Service

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and 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). This is no doubt the chief purpose of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. This power for special service is the distinctive result of having been filled with the Spirit.

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost before He began His public ministry and He did all His mighty works by the power of the Spirit. He preached in the power of the Spirit, and healed through the same divine power. "*The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:18, 19). "*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*" (Acts 10:38).

As great as were the Saviour's acts, He promised that His disciples would perform greater works through the power of the Spirit whom He would send unto them when He went to the Father. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father*" (John 14:12).

The disciples were transformed into different men after

the Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. In John 20:19 we see them huddled together behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews." That same group of men could not be kept behind prison doors (Acts 5:17,20) and they became as bold as lions as they stood before the Jewish authorities in the power of the Holy Ghost.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is of such vital necessity in connection with the individual's service for God because of the nature of the task that is committed to us as Christians. It is not a natural one, but a spiritual. We are sent out to accomplish a spiritual task and this cannot be done except with spiritual ability. We are in constant conflict with a mighty spiritual foe. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). We need spiritual weapons in order to combat these spiritual antagonists. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). There is no substitute for the power of the Holy Ghost. If we lack or refuse this we are helpless. Thank God "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Power Within

Jesus challenged, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive)" (John 7:37-39).

"Out of" — the power is to flow out of us. Therefore it must be in us. It is not enough that the Lord has the power; we must have it too. An outflow can only be an over-flow. We are to be more than mere empty channels. God is looking for vessels which He can fill so full that they will flow over. The only real blessing which others receive from our lives is that which over-flows. Before the stream can flow the vessel must be more than full.

It is not how much we can hold that counts, but how much we over-flow. We read in Joshua 3:15 "Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest." God is looking for folks who will over-flow that there might be a spiritual harvest.

Note that great verse in Ephesians 3:20: *Now unto him that is able to do*

ALL . . .

ALL that we ASK . . .

ALL that we ASK or THINK . . .

ABUNDANTLY ALL that we ASK or THINK . . .

EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL that we ASK or THINK."

What a promise this is! But did you notice the last clause of the verse? — "according to the power that worketh in us." It is not enough that God has such power; we must have it in us by His Spirit. Jesus gave His disciples

power to heal the sick and cast out demons. "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1). It was His power, to be sure, but they had it. We, too, may have such power through the Holy Ghost.

The secret of power in the life after having received the baptism is to keep filled with the Spirit and to live a holy life. There may be manifestations of spiritual gifts but there will be little power therefrom except as the heart and life is holy before God. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

THE NECESSITY OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Why do we need this experience?

One will not have to search far to find the need for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Our Lord, who knows us better than we know ourselves, who comprehends the requisites for Christian conquest better than man can ever comprehend them has commanded us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If there were no need for "fullness" other than that of obeying the Lord's command, it would be need enough. However, the commands of the Lord are neither capricious nor arbitrary. He always has a wise reason behind all His requirements. We cannot always discern the divine wisdom which prompts the commandments of Scripture, but we do know that God has work to do which has been delegated to us; and further, He who has called us into service and appointed our tasks knows perfectly what enablement for service is necessary for the fulfillment of our duties. Obviously, then, the Pentecostal experience is necessary because it is commanded.

However, there are other understandable reasons why each believer needs to be filled with the Spirit other than that of rendering unquestioning obedience to the Lord. Do we not feel within ourselves the need of greater power, deeper love, clearer guidance, fuller understanding, stronger faith, and more profound spirituality? Does not the very fact that we possess these qualities in a limited sense suggest to us the need for having them in the fullest sense possible? If we have witnessed for Christ with meager results, do we not feel the urge for a yet

more influential testimony? If we have felt the mercy drops falling around us, are we not eager for the showers of blessings? If we have experienced the Spirit's quickening unto life, has it not aroused within us the desire to experience the Spirit's endowment with power for service? If the Spirit's residence in the vestibule of our lives has brought us sweet communion, would it not be glorious if He should fill the whole house? The fact is that the most useful and successful Christians of all ages have experienced the Spirit's fullness, and those who have left to us their testimonies witness that they sought the experience out of a deep sense of need for more of God.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*How do we know from Scripture that salvation and the "fullness" of the Spirit are distinct experiences?*

On the other hand, there are those who deny the need for any experience of grace after conversion, arguing that the work of redemption provided all, consequently, that all is received in one single work of regeneration. These persons say that a doctrine of two experiences

belittles the Christ's work of regeneration. We affirm, however, that our Pentecostal doctrine instead of belittling the work of redemption, rather exalts it. We do not deny that all graces are included in Christ's finished work, nor that the work of the Holy Spirit is always in relation to the work of Christ. But we do contend that while the work of the Cross releases all blessings, man's faith is equal to the appropriation of blessings and provisions only one at a time. We do not deny that some, like those in the house of Cornelius, may receive the blessings of regeneration and the baptism in the Spirit almost simultaneously; yet we positively affirm that the two are distinct provisions, distinct experiences, and given for distinct purposes. Someone might have sufficient faith to claim God's full provision at one time, but such is not usually the case in our day, nor was it usually the case in the apostolic times. In almost every case in the book of Acts the experiences of conversion and the Holy Spirit's "fullness" were received at different times. If the Word of God calls the two experiences by different names, describes their bestowal as occurring at distinct moments in time, and attaches to each experience a different purpose, then we say that they are distinct experiences. To teach people that God always bestows all His graces and enablements in one package is to discourage Christian progress. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is definitely a deeper experience and a deeper experience that we all need.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Have your class work alone or in groups to write a paragraph that tells why they believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If you are working alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

★For further information on the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you may study the supplement on the next few pages.

EXPOSITION

Text: Acts 1:4,8; 19:1-7

Acts 1:4,8 is the greatest promise of the New Testament to the believer. Now it must not be overlooked that it is a promise to believers, for one is not concerned with power for service and for witnessing until he has already been regenerated. The unconverted are in need of forgiveness, while the converted are in need of power to serve. Pardon and power, while purchased by the same work of redemption, are not the same gift, nor are they often (if ever) bestowed at the same time. However, those who have received the Lord, and who have been quickened unto life, may be certain that the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost is definitely their privilege. "*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all: how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things*" (Romans 8:32). The "*all things*" includes the power of Pentecost.

Acts 19:1 — When Paul arrived at Ephesus he found certain disciples who were professing Christians. It is obvious that they were only imperfectly enlightened; however, as they were called "disciples" it is not likely that they were wholly ignorant of the Christian faith. Paul obviously took them to be believers even though they were lacking in spiritual power.

Acts 19:2 — While Paul took for granted that these disciples had believed something, he was aware that they were lacking in power to witness to others. It was characteristic of early Christians to be very zealous in soul winning. It was perhaps weakness in this respect that led the apostle to question them regarding their experience. Whenever professing Christians are obviously lacking in power and a passion for souls, it is perfectly in order to ask them Paul's question, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*" If we do not have power, then we are not full of the Holy Spirit. If Paul should make an excursion through the Christian churches of our day, he would be frequently asking whether or not they had received the Holy Spirit. As soon as one becomes a believer, he should seek the fullness of the Spirit. Pentecost should not be far beyond Calvary. Power and pardon are separate blessings, but one should not be long following the other. Yet the two experiences may be years apart if there is no faithful preacher to inquire, "*Have ye received?*" A comparison of Acts 19 with Acts 8 will show that the Apostles were always eager to have new converts filled with the Spirit. The spread of the Gospel could not have been accomplished by the Apostles alone. They were aware of the need of empowered deacons and laymen to help in the work of the Gospel. Likewise we should be aware today that the success of the church depends upon the empowerment of all Christians. Some are saying that the country needs a new group of powerful evangelists like Moody, Torrey,

and Sunday. Indeed, we would welcome the appearance of a number of preachers of such calibre, but they would not be the real solution. What is really needed is a general outpouring of Holy Ghost power upon all Christians who have not yet received. With their newly inspired zeal and empowered witness they would fill the churches with seekers after Christ.

Acts 19:3 — When Paul perceived the imperfect state of their knowledge of the Gospel, he proceeded at once to acquaint them with the full import of Christianity. Before we encourage anyone to seek power, we should make certain that he has a thorough grounding in Christian truth, and that he is a genuine believer. While we should take believers on immediately to the deeper experience, we should make certain first that they are genuine believers. The Full Gospel churches have sometimes welcomed fanaticism by urging insincere persons to seek an experience of "fullness," which persons, being ignorant or insincere, often achieve an imitation experience which is capable of harmful extremes. Genuine believers receive genuine power which is not fanatical but a real blessing to the Church.

Acts 19:5 — This verse lends no credence to the "Jesus Only" doctrine. They were said to have been baptized in Jesus' name to distinguish their Christian baptism from that of John. The exact formula commanded by Jesus (Matthew 28:19), which Paul no doubt followed, is not mentioned here due to the brevity of the narrative. Paul's inquiry as to how these Ephesians could have been baptized without hearing of the Holy Ghost shows that it was his custom to follow the Lord's commanded formula, administering the sacrament in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, "*In the name of Jesus,*" used in a general sense as here, means "in reference to." Whatever is done in the name of Jesus is characterized by some reference to or relationship to Jesus.

Acts 19:6 — Those who reject the doctrine of a second work of baptism in the Holy Spirit as distinct from regeneration resort to one or the other of two devious interpretations. They say, either that the coming of the Holy Spirit was in each case synonymous with regeneration, or that the Holy Ghost experience was subsequent to and distinct from regeneration, but a gift intended only for the apostolic age. Now it must be admitted that in the book of Acts the enduement with the Spirit is usually after conversion, and in Acts 8, considerably later than conversion. In several instances it followed water baptism. If we cannot follow the Bible pattern in modern times how can we know what to follow? If God no longer has a baptism of power for

service distinct from conversion, how can we be sure God has anything for modern Christians except church relationship? The theory of some is that the Spirit's anointing accompanied by the sign of tongues was given only when a new racial group accepted the gospel, such as to Jews at Pentecost; to Samaritans in Philip's revival, and to gentiles in the house of Cornelius. But this theory breaks down in Acts 19:6, because these Ephesians are a part of no new racial grouping. If the anointing and the tongues did not cease after the outpouring in the house of Cornelius where pure Gentiles first entered the Church, who has authority to say when they ceased, if they, indeed, did cease.

We affirm that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an anointing, like the mantle of Elijah, which is given for the special purpose of imparting to regenerated believers power for service. We do not have to defend this dogma with devious explanations. All believers of all races during all ages need this special power. An examination of church history will reveal the fact that all great men of power who have advanced the march of the gospel to all nations have testified to a deeper experience with God subsequent to conversion, to which they attributed their success in soul winning. We read in Acts 2:38-39, "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" From these verses two things are evident; first, the gift of the Holy Ghost is to follow water baptism and if it follows baptism it certainly must follow regeneration, as a distinct experience; second, the promise is not a special sign for the apostolic age, but is to all that are afar off (in place or time) and will be bestowed just as long as God's call to salvation continues to go forth.

Twenty years after Pentecost the gift of the Spirit is still being given (at Ephesus) and it is still evidenced by speaking with tongues. If tongues are an evidence of the experience in the last recorded occasion of the reception of the experience, who has authority to say that they are no longer the evidence? Furthermore, if in our final description of the anointing, the writer is careful to mention that they spake with tongues, are we not warranted in taking for granted that tongues still accompany the experience? Surely it is up to those who deny that tongues still accompany the gift of the Spirit to give a

valid reason why they have ceased, or why the last manner of reception is not now the true manner.

It is worth noting that the verbs for *speaking* (in tongues) and prophesying are in the imperfect tense (continuous past action) and imply that the functions of speaking in tongues and prophesying continued as permanent evidences of their newly empowered lives. These miraculous signs were not momentary phenomena, but manifestations of continued power. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not simply a passing experience, but the initial infusion of the Spirit — which opens the door to a Spirit filled life. Beyond question the Ephesian disciples were empowered for service in order to assist in the great revival which shook the whole region around Ephesus. Will not God send such a special power at any time that there are fields to evangelize? Manifestations of the Spirit and divine healings followed in all the Biblical revivals and campaigns of evangelization, and if they are wanting in some quarters today, it would be much better for us to search our hearts and confess our debilitated faith, than to waste time making devious explanations which do violence to sound biblical interpretation. We do better to remould our lives than to attempt to rewrite the Bible. There is indeed power for service available to all who have a passion for lost souls. If Luther, Wesley, Finney, A.J. Gordon, Murray, Moody and Torrey prayed and received a baptism of power years after their conversions, we may be sure that Pentecostal power is still available to all who want to win souls.

Power from on high is "ability" from heaven. God-given ability to do God-given tasks and to carry out God-given commissions. It is the ability of a Person who abides within us. It is the ability to follow divine guidance, guidance into fields known only to God. It is ability to respond to divine providence. It is ability to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. It is ability to love divinely as Jesus loved. It is ability to preach Christ with conviction and persuasion. It is, moreover, ability to exercise spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church. It is further, ability to suffer persecution for the Lord's sake. It is, also, ability to live a holy life above the sordid standard of the world. Finally, it is ability to work for God, to work lovingly, willingly, faithfully, and untiringly; ability to work until Jesus comes or until earth's race is run. God give us power (ability) from on high.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part 1

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What relation does the baptism with the Spirit have to the Foursquare Gospel? _____

2. What is the "baptism with the Holy Spirit"? _____

3. What will one receive who has the Spirit? _____

4. Why do we need this experience? _____

5. How do we know from Scripture that salvation and the "fullness" of the Spirit are distinct experiences? _____

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part 2

AIM: It will be our purpose in this lesson to show that the Pentecostal experience was not only a phenomenon to mark the birthday of the Church, but a spiritual outpouring intended to be the normal divine provision for fully adequate Christian work and witness, available to all believers of all stations, at all times, all races, and all callings. It will further be our purpose to set forth the conditions upon the fulfillment of which God pours out the fullness of His Spirit upon believers. We will also explore how one actually receives the baptism with the Holy Ghost and what is the evidence of this experience.

KEY VERSES:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:44-46).

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you. . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38,39).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Working alone or in groups use your Bible and concordance, and write down all the Scripture passages you can find that give account of the outpouring of the Spirit. Note what group of people is mentioned, if tongues accompanied the outpouring, and any other facts you discover in each passage.

INTRODUCTION

The Pentecostal experience has more than historical attraction to us Foursquare people. We believe that Jesus Christ as well as the Holy Spirit is the same yesterday, and today and forever. We believe that God is no respecter of times (within the Church age) any more than He is a respecter of persons. In our opinion, there were no needs, problems or urgencies existing in early Church times that do not still exist today. We feel that as long as the Great Commission still is in effect binding us to the duty of worldwide evangelization, there will still be a provision for power to fulfill the commission. Our interest in spiritual experience is not an academic, but a practical one.

my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28,29).

That this prophecy refers to the experience bestowed on the Day of Pentecost is perfectly clear from the fact that Peter quoted this prophecy as that of which the Pentecostal outpouring was a fulfillment.

Further, that the initial experience was not the only or final outpouring we know; first, because the promise was for **ALL FLESH**, not merely a band of disciples; and second, because the fulfillment was for the last days which continue until the second advent of Christ.

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST?

For All Times

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★For whom is the promise of the Spirit? Back your answer with Scripture reference.

The Universality of the Gift

For All Flesh

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out

It is surprising the number of people who believe that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit was just for those who lived at that time—that they needed a supernatural endowment of power which, for some reason or other, the church does not need today. This idea is certainly not in keeping with the words of Peter on that memorable day of the first outpouring, *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you. . .and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38,39).* It is hard to imagine one confining such a promise to any sort of limitation as far as time is concerned. Peter referred to the present generation of his day when he said *“The promise is unto you.”* He specifically included the next

generation with the words, "And to your children." One would gather that he was thinking of future generations when he said, "and to all that are afar off." Some might limit that to a few hundred years, but it is hard to say the next words do not mean every Christian of every future day—"Even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for the Church of God in all ages.

For All Believers

It is not simply for ministers, missionaries and those in special service for the Lord. If there is one truth that is emphasized in the New Testament Epistles it is that of the unity of the body of Christ and the importance of every member of that body. The apostle Paul plainly and emphatically teaches that no one member is of greater importance than another (See I Corinthians 12:21-25). If this be true, then every Christian is of equal importance to the accomplishing of God's perfect will through His Church. The humblest Christian who is walking in the center of God's will, is just as much a servant of the Lord as the most famous preacher of his day. One is called to one ministry and another to another (See Romans 12:3-8). God is concerned with our being faithful wherever He has placed us. Every Christian needs the baptism with the Holy Spirit to be able to fulfill his part in the great scheme of ministering the gospel to a needy world.

It is not simply for a special privileged class. Peter had to learn that the fullness of the Spirit was for Gentiles as well as Jews (See Acts 10:34,35,44-48; 11:15-18). The Lord is no respecter of persons and plays no favorites. The lovely thing about every phase of the Gospel is that everyone is treated the same and God's gifts are free to all alike.

Neither must we think that after we have received the baptism with the Spirit we are better than others. All of God's gifts are of grace, and that which is received freely in no wise contributes to the personal glorification of the individual. The glory all belongs to Him—the Great Giver. One of the saddest things is to see one Christian exulting over another because he has received his baptism. This experience never increases our personal prestige but rather only serves to greatly increase our responsibility. We have greater power; God has a right to expect greater service.

It is not simply for matured Christians. There is abroad a good deal of sentiment that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is only for those who are deeply matured in their Christian life, and one must wait until he achieves such a position before he can hope to receive. Notice that the Lord baptized the Samaritan Christians just a few days after their conversion (See Acts 8:14-17). The Christians in the house of Cornelius were filled with the Spirit almost immediately after believing the word which Peter was preaching to them. In fact his sermon was interrupted by the Holy Ghost falling upon them (See Acts 10:44-46).

The youngest believer needs and can have this gift of God. It is for power for service and we need that just as soon as we enlist under the banner of the Lord. Christians were taught to expect the baptism with the Holy Ghost immediately after conversion and water

baptism (See Acts 2:38).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What is necessary to receive the gift?

The Conditions for Receiving the Gift

Repentance From Sin

When the multitude came to Peter on that memorable Pentecost day and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he replied, "Repent. . . be baptized. . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37,38). Repentance, then, is the very first step. The Holy Ghost cannot operate where sin holds sway (See also Acts 17:30).

A Definite Experience of Salvation

Repentance must be followed by faith in the Saviour for salvation. Repentance of itself is only negative. A positive faith is necessary before the new birth takes place. Luke 11:13 stresses the fact that it is our "heavenly Father" who gives "the Holy Spirit to them that ask."

Thus we must be in the family of God before we can expect this gift. The Spirit is the gift of the Father, and only those who have been saved can call Him Father. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

Water Baptism (See Acts 2:38; 8:12; 19:5,6)

The order seems to be repentance, regeneration, water baptism and then the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Each step of obedience opens the way for the next. We would not say that one who has not been baptized in water could never receive the fullness of the Spirit, but, inasmuch as water baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord, it is necessary. No one, who is knowingly and willingly disobedient to any of God's commands, can have faith to receive the fullness of the Spirit. Faith always follows obedience.

It is interesting, though, to notice that in two cases mentioned in the Acts, the outpouring of the Spirit preceded water baptism. It would seem that the apostle Paul was healed of his blindness and filled with the Spirit as Ananias laid his hands upon him saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." After this we read, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:17,18).

We definitely know that those who were gathered in the house of Cornelius believed the word Peter preached

and were filled with the Spirit right there. Peter seeing it, said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized. . . in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47,48). However, we note that in both of these cases water baptism followed immediately. The Holy Spirit came upon new believers before they had a chance to be baptized in water. For those who are believers and seeking the Spirit's fullness, water baptism is a necessary step.

Sanctification

A full surrender to the will of God. This implies a dying to our own selfish will and a complete obedience to God's will in everything. "We are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). It means that we accept a completely new standard for our lives. It is God's will and not ours that henceforth predominates. We are set aside and dedicated to Him and His service.

Do not confuse this yieldedness of our will with a complete abandonment of the will in the sense that we must become will-less. This is dangerous for it leaves one open to the power of evil spirits. At all times one is in full possession of his will and all his faculties. It does, however, mean the changing of the center of our will from self to Christ. I make the highest use of my will by being willing to let God, the Holy Ghost, have His way with me. The natural will is so completely set against God's will that one must certainly use his will in the highest sense to yield it to God completely.

A deeper cleansing of the self-life. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and 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" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). If the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, then it must be purged of all self and sin. This must take place before the Holy Spirit will come in. As one is seeking for the Spirit's fullness He will reveal that in the life which is unlike Him.

Undoubtedly the mention, by John the Baptist, of the fire accompanying the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11) suggests the thought of purging. Fire is to burn — to consume the dross. This purging ministry of the Spirit also continues after one is baptized with the Spirit.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★Does one necessarily have to long to receive the Holy Spirit? Explain.

A Deep Conviction of Need

There must be a real hunger and thirst before one will receive the Spirit. God does not give such gracious gifts except as they are desired and will be deeply appreciated. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after

righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. . . this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive" (John 7:37,39).

HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST

How does one actually receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost? This is not an easy question to answer because God is not confined to just one method of fulfilling His promises, nor are any two human beings exactly alike in their reception of spiritual things. There are, however, certain general principles which can be observed and which serve as a guide to the sincere, seeking soul.

Full Yieldedness

There must be a full yieldedness of the entire being, in order that the Spirit might have His own way. This is often the most difficult condition to fulfill. After one's heart and life are fully surrendered to the Lord for His will to be completely done, there is still the matter of the yieldedness of the various faculties of the soul and body. It is generally easier for one to do something for himself than to yield to another to do it for him. John said, concerning Jesus. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; Matthew 3:11). Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. He is the one who does the baptizing. Just as the candidate must yield himself to the minister who is baptizing him in water, so the individual must yield himself to the Lord Jesus who is baptizing him with the Holy Spirit.

This thought of yieldedness is perhaps the fundamental thought behind the entire Spirit-filled life and ministry. Every phase of our service after this must be the result of our yielding to the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. Thus God seeks to teach us, right on the start, the secret of yielding to Him.

Here is something that it is virtually impossible to tell another how to do. Some who have sought for years, and wondered why they never received the full anointing, have testified, after having been filled with the Spirit, that if they had only known they could have received much sooner. But each must learn this important lesson for himself, because God wants us to know how to let Him have His way in the days to come. There is something blessedly individualistic about this great experience with God, and it seems the Lord has left it so that each must learn for himself.

It is vitally important, however, to realize that at no time does the Lord require, nor want, us to surrender our own personality. Many of the satanic cults of the day seek to bring a person to the place of the negation of his own personality. This the Lord does not do. He has given us the personality which we possess and He would operate through it. The Holy Spirit does not take our place. He simply seeks to shine through us, enhancing and glorifying our talents and our entire being.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Why is "tarrying" sometimes necessary?

Tarrying — waiting on God — is sometimes necessary. Often there is a longer or shorter period of tarrying in the presence of the Lord before the Spirit comes in His fulness. Jesus said to the disciples, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; See also Acts 1:4).

Why, it is asked, should it be necessary to tarry when the Holy Spirit has already been poured out? Why cannot we just receive? One of the purposes of the "tarrying" period is that our soul may be cleansed and brought into the place of full surrender and yieldedness. God teaches us much during this period of waiting in His presence. It becomes a season of great heart searching. Often the Spirit will reveal things that must be made right and the seeker will have the opportunity to obey the promptings of the Lord. Usually there are revelations of great pride and the need of a sincere humility before the Lord. As each lesson is learned and each leading of the Spirit complied with, rich blessings sweep over the soul and one is brought more and more to the place where the Holy Ghost can use him.

On the other hand, there need be no tarrying if we will simply believe and yield to the Holy Ghost. Never entertain the idea that you must wait a long time until God is ready to baptize you. He is ready at all times — has been ready ever since the first Pentecostal outpouring. He has promised and is always ready and willing. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13) Perhaps we should call our "tarrying services" "receiving services." The tarrying period is more a matter of the Lord waiting for us to receive than our waiting for Him to give. But still, it is well to remember that being baptized with the Holy Ghost is not just an experience wherein some great power comes upon us, but is rather the coming of a person — the third person of the Trinity. Let us not try to force Him but believe in His willingness to anoint us and patiently, expectantly await His coming.

Faith

"That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

Faith in the Promises of God

Faith is not centered on anything in yourself, but on the fact that God has promised and will fulfill His Word.

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that you receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24; See also Luke 11:11-13).

Faith That the Promise Is for You

"For the promise is unto you. . ." (Acts 2:38,39). "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:10). A general belief in the promises is not enough. There must be a personal appropriation of the Word. It is not a case of personal worthiness, but of God's promise to us individually because of the worthiness of Jesus. It is not glorifying to God to believe that He will do for another what He is not willing to do for me.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★Why does God require persistence?

A Persistency of Faith That Will Not Be Denied

In Luke 11:5-10 and Luke 18:1-8 we find two parables that emphasize the necessity of an importunity of faith — a persistency that knows what has been promised and will not give up until the promise has been fulfilled. There may be many things to discourage a person who is seeking the fulness of the Spirit and he needs this persistency that will allow nothing to turn him aside. God often allows us to wait to prove the sincerity of our faith, for to be baptized with the Holy Ghost marks a great turning point in one's Christian experience and the Lord is anxious that our motives and desires be fully tested.

Faith Will Be Manifested in Praise and Thanksgiving

Realizing the greatness of what God is about to do should cause our heart to be filled with the greatest thankfulness and inspire one to praise Him from the fulness of the heart. Almost invariably the Holy Ghost comes as one is praising the Lord. Praise is the manifestation of faith. Let it not be just the manifestation of our feeling. You can praise the Lord even when you do not feel like it. This is not hypocrisy. God is the same regardless of how we may feel and He is always worthy of our praise. Sometimes it is well to offer the "sacrifice of praise."

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST WAS RECEIVED

- Suddenly, while sitting and expecting Him to come (Acts 2:1-4).
- Instantly and unexpectedly while hearing a sermon (Acts 10:44-46).
- Through prayer and the laying on of apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-17; 9:17; 19:6).
- Through the seeker's personal prayer and faith (Luke 11:9-13; John 7:37-39).

HOW THE BLESSING IS HINDERED

Weak Faith

Weak faith may be due to meager knowledge of the blessing. Some have hardly heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. Again lack of faith may be caused by the notion that long periods of "tarrying" are invariably necessary before the Spirit will come. To exercise real appropriating faith, one must believe that the blessing is possible "now." It is always easier to believe for any experience if such is regularly being received. When one receives, faith is quickened in all.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Why may not one receive who lives an unclean life?

Unholy Living

Unholy living is a very solid barrier to reception of the Holy Spirit. It should not be difficult for anyone to understand why the Spirit of God who is HOLY, would be reluctant to abide in an avoidably unclean vessel. Surely the requisite of cleaning is pointedly expressed by Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:19-21.

Imperfect Consecration

Imperfect consecration is, likewise, a hindrance to "fulness." The baptism in the Holy Spirit is given to impart power (ability) for service. Unless one is willing to yield his vessel to God for whatever service God may require, why should God fill him? We would not pray, "Lord, fill me with power to serve, but exempt me from service." Yet many who for some reason seek the Pentecostal gift have no intentions to serve; at least, not in any way God may require.

Wrong Motives

Finally, let it be observed that ego-centric motives may be a widely prevalent reason for delay in receiving the "blessing." Why are we seeking the promise of the Father? Is it in order that we may not be behind others in the church in the matter of attainment? Do we seek the Comforter only in order to enjoy an emotional experience? Or is it that we wish to be esteemed as spiritual? One's desire to receive the Spirit unto "fulness" should not be in any way a selfish desire, but rather a desire to be more useful to God in the winning of souls and the extension of His kingdom. If one desires God's gift for the same reason that God desires to impart it, then he will quickly receive. The difficult thing in this connection is that we find it so hard to discern our real motive.

EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The question of the initial evidence of the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit is one of paramount importance to all Full Gospel people, and to all who hunger to be filled with the Spirit. It is, indeed, logical that the

supernatural experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit will be accompanied by some definite and unmistakable sign by which the seeker is assured of attainment. There are many operations of the Spirit, but only one baptism in the Spirit. If there were no particular supernatural evidence of the baptism in the Spirit by which it could be distinguished from other operations of the Spirit, how could anyone certainly be assured of the experience? Many are the blessings of the prayerful Christian life, but the baptism in the Spirit is not merely a "blessing"; it is a distinct experience with a definite purpose, which experience all believers should receive.

Is There a Sign Displayed Unmistakably in the Bible Accounts of the Reception of the Pentecostal Experience?

Isaiah 28:11

The immediate reference of this passage was to the barbarian tongue of the Assyrian invader by which God would speak in judgment to a backslidden Israel. However, there is here a secondary reference to the phenomenon of speaking in other tongues by which God also speaks to the unbeliever. We are warranted in making this latter application by Paul's quotation of Isaiah 28:11 in 1 Corinthians 14:21,22, where he is proving that tongues are in some cases a sign to the unbeliever. This portion in Isaiah has no direct bearing upon tongues as the initial evidence, but it provides a prophetic reference to the phenomenon of tongues.

Mark 16:17

Here is a direct and unmistakable prophetic reference to tongues made by our Lord Himself. The phenomenon of tongues is connected by Jesus with the conquest of sickness and demon power, showing that it is some way a sign of power by which Christ's mighty works are to be done (See John 14:12). If we reject tongues, we must reject the rest of Christ's mighty works with the result that modern Christianity is reduced to a formal system of teaching.

Acts 2:4

Beyond any doubt the evidence of the Spirit's fulness on the Day of Pentecost was that of speaking in tongues by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was the original outpouring for the empowerment of the church. It was the pattern for all Pentecostal experiences. What the disciples did when they were filled, we reasonably expect all to do who are filled in the same sense. Inasmuch as the purpose of the anointing was to give power to witness, we are not surprised that the sign of the experience was manifested in their utterance. The phenomenon of tongues indicated that they were empowered with the capacity to speak mightily in Christ's name to men of all tongues. We today who seek power to speak effectively in Christ's behalf can hardly be satisfied that the Spirit has filled us until we experience the quickening of our utterance in the form of supernatural speaking in tongues. When our organ of speech is fully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we are assured that He has entered in His fulness to dwell.

Here in the house of Cornelius we have a repetition of the Pentecostal outpouring. The circumstances are slightly different in that these men received the Holy Ghost outpouring immediately upon believing and in that they were Gentiles; however, the experience is the same as that received at Pentecost and the evidence of receiving is the same. Although these in the house of Cornelius received the fulness of the Spirit immediately upon believing, we must not confuse their Holy Spirit baptism with regeneration. It is here said that the Holy Ghost "fell upon" them, and that the fullness was poured out upon them. Regeneration is not an outpouring or a "falling upon," but an inward work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes into one in a limited sense at regeneration, while He comes "upon" to the extent of fulness in the Pentecostal experience.

It is interesting to note how the Jews who came with Peter knew that these Gentiles had received the same Holy Ghost experience that the disciples received on the Day of Pentecost. The Scripture says that they knew because they heard them "speak with tongues."

Acts 19:6

It has been argued that tongues accompanied the Holy Ghost experience only on those historic occasions when a new language or racial group received it; but such an argument is unsound, inasmuch as tongues accompanied the outpouring in Ephesus and in Corinth where no new ethnic groups can be distinguished. The Gentiles receive the Spirit in Acts 10, but tongues continued among Gentiles as an evidence of the baptism in the Spirit for many years, if not centuries afterward.

Acts 19 contains the very last biblical account of persons receiving the Holy Ghost, and there certainly is no indication that tongues were ceasing or diminishing, though the event took place many years after Pentecost.

Acts 1:8

Now, while speaking in tongues is the initial evidence—and we contend that it is the one essential evidence—of the reception of the fulness of the Spirit, it is not the most important *permanent* evidence. Tongues may be only a temporary phenomenon, but *power to witness for Christ* is the permanent evidence of the Spirit's anointing. We insist that every baptized believer will speak with tongues, but we do not seek tongues. We seek the indwelling presence and power of the Spirit Himself. We seek power through the Spirit to exalt Christ and to lead others to Him. We do not urge believers to seek merely for the thrill of speaking in ecstasy, but rather for the continued ability to participate powerfully in the extension of Christ's kingdom. The future prestige and influence of our "Full Gospel" churches depends upon our manifesting, in addition to speaking in tongues, the power of God which expressed itself in the salvation of souls, in the healing of the sick, and in the exaltation of Christ.

Evidence for Tongues as the Initial Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★*What historical evidence do we have for speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?*

Historical Argument

Speaking in tongues is an historical fact. Our belief that tongues constitute the sign of the initial filling with the Holy Spirit is not based upon theory, nor is it the result of deduction. Our belief is based upon the observation of what has really happened in history.

Prophecy — Mark 16. The phenomenon of "glossolalia" (speaking in tongues) was indeed prophesied by Christ, and it was, therefore, to be expected as a fulfillment of the prediction; but it is the real event in history to which we point as evidence.

Biblical Times. Glossolalia accompanied the first outpouring on the day of Pentecost. Further, every person who was filled on that historic day spoke with tongues without exception. In the house of Cornelius, the companions of Peter knew that the persons on whom the power fell were receiving the same Pentecostal experience the disciples received, because they heard them speak with tongues. The disciples Paul found at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6) spoke with tongues many years after Pentecost. The first and last biblical accounts of the reception of the Holy Spirit mention that the recipients spoke with tongues. In the accounts of every outpouring, tongues are mentioned as a sign if any sign at all is mentioned. Where tongues are not mentioned, there is strong inference that tongues, nevertheless, were in evidence. The glossolalia phenomenon was in manifestation in the churches down to the very end of the biblical period.

Modern Evidence. We note finally the modern historical evidences of speaking with tongues. During the 18th and 19th centuries there were several groups of believers among whom the glossolalia phenomenon appeared such as the Camisards, in France, and Irvingites of Scotland and England. The greatest modern evidence of tongues, however, is to be found in our own "Full Gospel" movements which have become world-wide in extension and which count millions of followers. The fact that God has seen fit to honor the faith of millions by baptizing them in the Holy Spirit with the accompanying sign of "glossolalia" certainly demonstrates to the point of proof that God is pleased to grant an experience, in all phases Pentecostal, to such as believe in it. There have been many excesses, distortions, and fanatical tangents in the general "Full Gospel" movement, as there have been in all great revival movements, but the main "Pentecostal" groups have been sane, biblical and powerful evangelical bodies which have given Christianity a new impetus. We are willing to let our argument be judged by the historical record.

A sign in the speech. We affirm that speaking with tongues, in view of the purpose of the Pentecostal experience, is a perfectly logical evidence of fulness. The Holy Ghost comes upon one in order to empower him for witnessing; therefore, any supernatural evidence of such empowerment will naturally manifest itself in his speech, showing that God has full control over his organ of speaking. As long as one is speaking in his own language his own mind and will are active, but when he speaks in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, his own mind is passive, and the Spirit obviously has control.

Some sign needed. This leads us to remark that some clearly unmistakable sign of the fulness is needed, for otherwise, how would one distinguish the baptism in the Spirit from some other operation of the Spirit. There is one baptism but many blessings. Some say that we need only take the experience by "faith" as we take salvation by faith; however, the difference is that salvation depends only upon acceptance by the sinner, who in his fallen state can do nothing of merit to qualify for it, while the reception of the "fulness" of the Spirit requires in addition to faith a certain measure of consecration and prayer. One seeking the fulness of the Spirit may accept a blessing presumptuously as the full experience, thus stopping short of the goal. How much more logical is the assumption that an experience as vital and as important as the baptism in the Holy Spirit will be accompanied by a sign that is exclusive and unmistakable. It has been the observation of many that those who say they received the Holy Spirit without any sign frequently betray doubt and uncertainty about the reality of their experience.

Answers to Objections to Speaking with Tongues as the Initial Evidence

Not Always Mentioned

Some oppose tongues as the exclusive initial evidence on the ground that tongues are not always mentioned in the Bible in connection with the baptism in the Spirit. It is true that three accounts say nothing of tongues, but the omission is due to the brevity of those accounts. In the account of the outpouring on the Samaritans, no mention is made of any accompanying sign, but the fact that Simon was willing to pay money for the power to impart the gift shows that some audible or visible sign made the reception of the gift spectacular. Simon saw or heard something. It is logical that he heard what was heard in Acts 2:4 (speaking with tongues). In Acts 4 tongues are not specifically mentioned, but the evidence was in their speaking which, as in Acts 19:6, no doubt began with tongues as at Pentecost. In Acts 9:17 we do not read that Paul spoke with tongues, but that he did is certain from his testimony of the phenomenon in his life (1 Corinthians 14:18).

An objection to tongues in the present day church is based upon 1 Corinthians 13:8: "*whether there be tongues they shall cease.*"

Yes, tongues will cease, prophecy will fail and knowledge will vanish away, but *when*? Paul says, "*when that which is perfect is come.*" The objectors say that "*that which is perfect*" refers to the New Testament. Now, we do not deny the perfection of God's Word, but Paul is not speaking of the Word, but of love in its perfect manifestation.

Now, tongues have never completely ceased among consecrated believers. The gifts did all diminish almost to the vanishing point when the church became formal and worldly, but tongues and prophecy continued as long as the church was apostolic in consecration. If tongues ceased it was not because God willed it to be so, but because men belittled the supernatural. J. Gilchrist Lawson shows in his book, "Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians," that in every time of revival, true believers have sought and received the Holy Ghost.

Not Essential

Some take a compromise stand, admitting that tongues are scriptural and sometimes the evidence of the Pentecostal blessing, but reason that they are not really essential or important. If tongues are sometimes evidence, then they may accompany every experience. Why not have the unmistakable evidence according to Acts 2:4? If we begin to esteem tongues as unimportant, then they will pass away among us. We do not seek tongues, but we have the assurance that when the Holy Spirit comes in we will speak as He gives utterance. If what all did on the Day of Pentecost is possible today for some, then it is possible for all who are filled in the same manner.

Of the Devil

There are persons who go so far as to say that tongues are of the devil. Paul, who said he spoke with tongues more than all, certainly was God's man. The devil may have his counterfeit, but there must be a real before there can be a false. If our enemy is producing false tongues in some quarters, it is only because God is using tongues among certain true people. Some find it easy to attribute every evidence of the miraculous to Satan while limiting God to natural modes of operation. Every blessing of God has been attributed by someone to the devil.

No Modern Miracles

The modernist opposes tongues, because he opposes everything supernatural. He thinks he can account for tongues as a psychological phenomenon. However, to the modernist, the idea of God is also a psychological phenomenon. Those who believe in a real, personal, powerful God, who is active among His creatures, should not have trouble accepting a biblical manifestation so common as tongues.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Divide the class into small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. How do we know that the Pentecostal experience was intended to be a general outpouring of the Spirit rather than merely the marking of the birthday of the Christian Church?
2. What New Testament promise shows that this anointing was to continue to be offered to all?
3. If the baptism in the Spirit is immediately available to all believers for the asking, what are the causes of delay in receiving?
4. How would you answer someone who objects to speaking with tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? (Be sure to include an answer for each of the five objections listed in this lesson.)

*If you are studying this lesson alone, write your thoughts and answers to the above questions on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part 2

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. For whom is the promise of the Spirit? Back your answer with Scripture reference. _____

2. What is necessary to receive the gift? _____

3. Does one necessarily have to long to receive the Holy Spirit? Explain. _____

4. Why is "tarrying" sometimes necessary? _____

5. Why does God require persistence? _____

6. Why may not one receive who lives an unclean life? _____

7. What historical evidence do we have for speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

AIM: To better understand what is meant by "The Spirit Filled Life" as set forth in the Foursquare Declaration of Faith: "We believe that while the Holy Spirit is as a mighty rushing wind and as tongues of living flame that can shake and set ablaze whole communities for God, He is also as a gentle dove, easily grieved and wounded by impiety, coldness, idle conversation, boastfulness, a judging or criticizing spirit and by thoughts and acts dishonoring to the Lord Jesus; that it is, therefore, the will of God that we live and walk in the Spirit, moment by moment, under the precious blood of the Lamb; treading softly as with unshod feet in the presence of the King; being patient, loving, truthful, sincere, prayerful, uncomplaining, instant in season, out of season, serving the Lord." — Aimee Semple McPherson

KEY VERSES:

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18,19).

"...Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16,25).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Read aloud Galatians 5:16-26. Instruct the class to "neighbor nudge" and share their thoughts regarding what is meant by "walking in the Spirit." Share the responses together as a class.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

★NOTE to instructor

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*May the believer enjoy additional fillings after he has been baptized in the Spirit?*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is perhaps the greatest single experience available to all believers. Those who have received this blessed experience have cause to be grateful to God for a priceless anointing. Let us take into account, however, that the baptism in the Spirit is only the initial experience of the Spirit-filled life. One may have been baptized in the Spirit who is not living daily in the fullness. There is one baptism, but many fillings. The baptism is the door which ushers one into a glorious life, but it is the responsibility as well as the privilege of the believer to walk continually in the fullness of the Spirit. The Spirit-filled life begins at Pentecost, but flows like a river on to the city of God. Many who have tasted of the Pentecostal blessing have failed to go on in the fullness and power of the Spirit. This considerable number within our "Full Gospel" churches, who now walk after the flesh, constitute one of our greatest problems. If God has filled us with His Spirit, let us go on walking daily in the power and joy of the Spirit's fullness.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Strength in the Inner Man

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

The petition here is that the believer might be strengthened. All who feel their weakness will welcome this prayer. Prayers should be made continually for the strengthening of the believers, in order that none be overcome by temptation. Not only does this verse suggest an essential prayer — that of our being strengthened — but it also reveals the place where one needs fortification which is in the inner man. All of us need physical and intellectual strength, but our great need is in the inner man. We need to be made strong in that faculty which exercises itself Godward. It is a tragedy to be weak toward God. Now, we further learn *how* one is to be fortified. Paul says that it is with power by His Spirit. The principal purpose of the Holy Spirit's abiding is that of empowerment. If we walk in the fullness of the Spirit we may expect to be made strong in the Lord and powerful in the Spirit to do His service. Finally, this verse discloses the unlimited scope of God's strengthening activity which is according to the riches of His glory. This is to say that our available spiritual strength is offered in an unlimited degree. If we are weak it is the fault of our faith. This verse may be summed up in outline as follows: (1) What? — Strength, (2) Where? — In the inner man, (3) How? — By His Spirit, (4) To what degree? — According to the riches of

His glory.

Power Which Allows God to Work Among Us

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*On what does God's ability depend?*

Nowhere in the Bible do we have a more expressive statement of the Lord's ability to do mighty things in His Church. He is able to do what we ask, no matter what it may be; but more, He is able to do even what we think. To make it more expressive Paul adds the word "all" which still does not reach the depth; therefore he pyramids word upon word: *All—above all—abundantly above all—exceeding abundantly above all*. Here language breaks down, just as any human attempt to conceive of God's ability falls short of its mark. God has infinite ability, but our concern is not with God's ability but with inward resources, for God's ability to work among us is in relation to the power that works in us. By failing to live a Spirit-filled life, we limit God's ability; we tie His hands. What a revival God could bestow upon us with His infinite ability, if only there was a greater number of Spirit-filled vessels through whom to work. Yet, we have no excuse, because the power of the Spirit is available to all believers; indeed such a possession of power is intended to be the normal state of each Christian life.

Christlike Speech and Conduct

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Why does evil speaking grieve the Spirit?*

Let us note what it is that grieves the Holy Spirit. The subject is crystal clear if we read the verses which immediately precede and follow verse 30. *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Verses 29, 31, 32).* The Holy Spirit who is like a dove, gentle, tender and peaceable, is grieved by loud and harsh speaking, by quarrelsomeness and strife, by accusations, by malicious slander, and by any kind of foul talk. The Spirit is grieved by anything in us which is unchristlike, but He is

particularly grieved by any evil use of our organ of speech, inasmuch as the purpose of the Spirit's anointing is that we may with our lips edify and administer grace (verse 29). Sweet and bitter waters do not properly flow from the same fountain. We conclude, then, that the Spirit-filled believer does not practice evil speaking in any form, and that if he does speak evil he grieves the Spirit who, in consequence, remains inoperative in his life.

Daily Fullness

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18,19).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*To what is the stimulating effect of the Spirit contrasted?*

The Holy Spirit's fullness is the stimulant of the believer. The worldly resort to various means of artificial stimulation which is temporary, shallow and deceptive. All carnal stimulation is followed by its consequent depression. The dulled spirit of the average unconverted person today is so insensible to the appeal of the higher values and the eternal realities that an enjoyable life is possible to him only under the condition that he be constantly stimulated by entertainment, carnal passion, alcohol, or a combination of all. The Spirit-filled believer, however, enjoys a full life, a sweet communion, a rich experience, a radiant hope and a useful service in which there is ever-increasing satisfaction. The Spirit-baptized person does not become drunken with wine, which leads to excess (dissoluteness), but he is filled with the blessed Comforter, which experience leads to glory upon glory. Christians certainly live far short of their sublime ideal who depend upon worldly entertainment and carnal pleasure for their satisfaction of life. There is a more abundant life available to every believer. Of course, there are many innocent diversions and enjoyable exercises in which the believer may harmlessly participate, but they are not his "life"; the true believer's "life" consists in prayer, meditation upon the Word, Christian worship, and especially service to mankind in the name of Christ.

Now, perhaps the reason why many so-called Christians seem to be disgruntled and defeated is that they are not filled with the Spirit. Those who resort to artificial stimulants seek the full effect of the stimulation; so let the believer seek the "fullness," the full power and operation of the Spirit of God. Some who once were filled may wonder why they are not now living in the joy of former days. Perhaps such are not now living in the continual fullness, but are attempting to live upon the momentum of a single past anointing. The Spirit-filled life consists not merely of a "second blessing" but of a constant experience of blessing and being blessed. We do not need to be content with being half full or nearly full

of God; we have been offered *complete fullness*.

The offer of fullness, however, is not completely unqualified. The experience of daily fullness depends upon our emptying ourselves in service to others. God bestows His fullness for service, not upon chronic blessing seekers who serve only themselves. Only the worker can be strong; only the laborer can be refreshed. God's infilling can have real meaning only to the person who is in turn bestowing his fullness of blessing upon others. It must also be added that God pours His fullness daily into vessels of givers, not into leaking vessels that lose their anointing through sin, complaint, and idle criticism.

When the members of a church live the Spirit-filled life, the result is revival, sweet harmony, reverent worship, joyful praise, mutual edification, and spiritual music. There are many imitations of the "fullness" which resort to meaningless choruses, blaring instruments, and vain display of human talent, but real worship makes use of edifying music, *spiritual* songs and Christ-exalting hymnology. The Spirit-filled care not for vain self display of human skill, but rather do they make melody in their hearts *unto God*. This is not to discourage talented music nor to discourage trained singers; God accepts all which is humbly dedicated to His glory.

Energized Prayer

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

The Spirit-filled life nowhere reveals itself so characteristically as it does in prayer. He who is filled with the Spirit prays in the Spirit. It might be further added that nowhere is the anointing more welcome than it is in one's prayer life. Prayer is wearisome which is not quickened by the Spirit. It is not easy to pray as one ought to pray. It is not easy to travail in prayer for the salvation of the lost. In fact, it is safe to say that no one really prays as Jesus taught His disciples to pray, that no one travails daily in prayer for the lost, that no one bears in regular supplication the burdens of the needy, that no one prays always for what he ought to pray, as he ought to pray, unless he is full of, and energized by the Holy Spirit of God. (Romans 8:26,27).

Walking in the Spirit

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?*

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16,25).

Not only are we exhorted to live in the Spirit, to worship in the Spirit, to pray in the Spirit, but also to *walk* in the Spirit. The evidence of our anointing should be seen on

the street, at work, at school, and at home as well as in the church. There are too many who are "spiritual" in church, who are something else away from church.

A Yielded Body

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and 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" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

If we are filled with the Spirit, it means that the Spirit who abides within us takes possession not only of our souls, spirits and minds, but also of our bodies. When God dwells within us, our bodies are God's temple. Our bodies should not be yielded to any practice that would make them unfit to be the dwelling place of the blessed Comforter.

Love

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

One of the greatest consequences of the Spirit's full abiding in the believer's heart is that God's love is shed abroad. He who is baptized in the Spirit has, at the same time, a baptism of love. It stands to reason that a more divinely anointed Christianity will be also a more loving, and therefore, more Christlike Christianity. How we ought to pray to be constantly Spirit-filled.

Physical Quickening

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

This verse suggests that the Spirit's anointing and abiding fullness brings a quickening of our physical bodies, not only for adequate strength to work, but also for divine health. Even the Spirit-filled who suffer in body witness to a God-given strength, by which they are sustained. God's anointing always brings some effect upon the physical body.

Righteousness, Peace, Joy

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

There are some who would make God's kingdom consist of the keeping of petty ordinances relative to eating and drinking, formulas, ceremonies and the keeping of days; but the kingdom of God is centrally righteousness, peace and joy in the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

Worship Guided by the Holy Spirit

"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Paul exhorted the Ephesians not to *grieve* the Holy

Spirit. The Spirit is grieved by unchristlike speech and conduct. Here we are commanded not to quench the Spirit which consists of resisting the operation of the Holy Spirit in our worship. The Spirit is grieved by wrong living, while the Spirit is quenched by formal, man-made worship. In a great many churches, unfortunately, the Holy Spirit is both grieved and quenched. Let us not busy ourselves to see if this last observation applies to some other church, but rather if it applies to our own church or churches, and further if we as individual believers are the cause of it.

THE POSSIBILITY OF DEGREES OF BEING SPIRIT-FILLED

Some persons cannot understand how the Spirit of God, who is a person, can be in a believer's life in any sense without filling that person's life completely. We, along with all the Full Gospel teachers and writers, acknowledge the fact that the Spirit comes into the life of every true believer at regeneration (Romans 8:9; John 20:22). Yet, we also believe that there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit and a constant Spirit-filled life in which one enjoys a fuller measure of the Spirit of God. The Spirit's being a person does not require that He fill a vessel always to the point of fullness, not always to the same degree. The countries of Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia, for instance, all have certain areas which are uncharted. That does not mean that the authority and sovereignty of those countries is not valid nor operative in any part of the republic just because some part is yet unoccupied. The government does not fill every part because some parts are inaccessible. Likewise, the Spirit possesses every part of the believer which is accessible and usable. He fills every one of our faculties of which He has yielded possession. Because electricity is in a wire does not mean that it is conducting all the voltage of which the wire is capable. The Spirit of God may be in a person without operating in that person to the full capacity. We must not think of God's Spirit as being limited, like us, to some measured size or space. The Spirit in His total person fills the whole world. He has an inconceivable number and variety of operations and may abide and reveal Himself in a person's life in a limitless number of ways. Yet, there is a full operation of the Spirit, in which He takes possession of every faculty of one's being and in which He manifests Himself through that person in such a manner that such an one is said to be full of the Holy Ghost. They who enjoy the Spirit's operation in any limited degree should seek to be filled with the Spirit, and to remain full of the Spirit so that God's full will for them may be accomplished.

THE POSSIBILITY OF RETROGRESSION FROM BEING SPIRIT-FILLED

All Fullness Must Be Maintained

There is a mistaken idea among many Full Gospel people that every one who has received the Pentecostal experience is always thereafter a Spirit-filled person. Ideally every Spirit-baptized believer should continue to maintain an experience of fullness, but in practical every day life such is not always nor often the case.

There is *one* baptism, but there are many fillings. In the outpouring recounted in Acts 4:31 there were without doubt many persons present who had received the Pentecostal experience, if not the entire one hundred and twenty, yet all received again the fullness of the Spirit. When deacons were needed to govern the administration of charity in Acts, the sixth chapter, men were sought out who were full of the Holy Ghost. Now many had unquestionably received the Pentecostal experience, yet apparently a limited number were living daily in the available fullness. There are many thousands of persons today who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit who are not living a Spirit-filled life, with the result that the unlearned question sometimes the validity of the Full Gospel message. "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8); consequently, there is a life of fullness available to every believer. However, if some come short, that does not make the reality invalid, nor prove false the Full Gospel. The fact is that there are many who are living the Spirit-filled life and they are the real power behind the Church.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians exhorting them to be *filled with the Spirit*." Such an admonition would not have been necessary if all were, as a matter of course, full of the Spirit. There has been a believing Church, a body of true saints, through all the ages, but in every generation there have been certain Christians who have stood out above the average because of the full operation of the Spirit's power in their lives. Great numbers have tasted on occasions the full blessing, but many of these fail to live daily in fullness. Let us not presumptuously take for granted that we are full of the Holy Ghost on the grounds that we once were baptized. Have we constantly enjoyed through the years, since our glorious baptism, the renewing of our minds and of our resources?

Constant Fullness Depends Upon a Constant Inflow

Any concept of fullness carries with it the idea of that which is less than full. If any container has ever been less than full it may again come to be less than full. Fullness is a condition or experience which must be maintained by some form of replenishment. The ideal type of fullness is that which is overflowing from a constant pouring of resources. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is just that type of experience of overflowing produced by "*rivers of living water springing up from within*." The Psalmist had this idea in mind when he said, "*My cup runneth over*." The Spirit-filled life is an artesian well experience; yet even an artesian well's flow may be stopped by obstacles or may be diverted by a severed connection.

The Spirit will always manifest Himself, but not necessarily through an unfit channel or an impure vessel. Every believer ought to be just as much concerned about keeping full of the Holy Ghost as he was in the beginning to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The fatal error of a great many otherwise sincere Christian brethren is that they rest presumptuously upon past experiences and attainments. Ever new day has its new tasks, its new needs, its new challenges and its new demands upon our resources. Therefore, every new day calls for a new replenishment

of spiritual power.

THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUANCE IN BEING SPIRIT-FILLED

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What are four sources of maintaining an experience of fullness?*

By Prayer

The most simple and obvious answer is that it is maintained by prayer. Jesus said, *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"* (Luke 11:13). Our Lord further said, *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"* (John 15:7). We received the Pentecostal anointing in the beginning in answer to prayer; will not God maintain in full flow the Spirit's artesian steams if we pray to that end? Prayer is power. Prayer is the means of fellowship by which all our needs are supplied. Shall we pray for the supply of every material need, and for the adjustment of every kind of earthly circumstance and not pray also for the continued fullness of the Spirit? Will God grant in answer to prayer material blessings and physical benefit and leave unanswered our constant plea for the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Rest assured that God delights to answer our prayers for spiritual power more than to grant our petitions for any other benefit.

By Service

The Pentecostal fullness is also maintained by the continual use of our God given power in true Christian service. If we have no intention of engaging in active service for Christ, then prayer for the "fullness" is presumptuous. If, on the other hand, our whole life is dedicated and lived in the service of Christ, we have every right to believe that God will supply the divine resources for the accomplishment of that service. Does not Jesus affirm this principle when He says, *"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:2,5). These verses make three classifications of fruit bearing: bearing fruit, bearing more fruit, and bearing much fruit. He who continues to bear much fruit will always find himself supplied with full resources from the Vine. *"... For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have"* (Luke 8:18).

By Worship

On the condition that one continues to serve the Lord

and to bear fruit, he may keep full of the Spirit of God by means of spiritual worship and communion with other Spirit-filled saints. If one is frequently in attendance where God's Spirit is bestowed, where the service is guided by the Spirit's direction, where spiritual gifts are operating according to Scriptural pattern, where God's Word is preached under the Spirit's anointing, he will certainly have every opportunity to avail himself of spiritual resources. All other factors being equal, the most spiritual worship produces the most spiritual living; however, one should not lightly assume that he will be spiritual because he attends a spiritual church. Neither should one despair of being spiritual, because he goes to an apparently unspiritual church. Spiritual worship is a great boon to spiritual living, but the individual consecration of the believer is a very decisive factor.

By Yieldedness

This leads us to point out that the Spirit-filled life is largely maintained by continually devoting ourselves to the Lord and to His service. Constant fullness depends upon constant yieldedness. Our consecration to Christ is once and for all, but our yielding to God is a daily and an hourly attitude. We have presented our bodies a living sacrifice to God, yet, daily, and hourly we yield our members as instruments of righteousness. There is a sense in which we are dead to sin — crucified with Christ — but there is another sense in which we die daily. We have died to the old life, yet we continue to reckon ourselves dead. We have been quickened unto life in Christ; however, we continue daily to reckon ourselves alive unto God.

HINDRANCES TO BEING CONTINUALLY SPIRIT-FILLED

Unchristlike Speech

Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is a person, He may be grieved, offended or distrusted. He may be grieved, as pointed out earlier, by any kind of unchristian speech or conduct. All the sacred writers warn against careless, idle, and malicious use of the tongue. James, especially, has some very pointed things to say to those who do not control their tongues. Although, the tongue is a "little member," it may be a big factor in grieving the blessed Comforter and in hindering His full operation in one's life. If one can control his tongue, he has gone far in the battle against the carnal nature. Unchristlike speech is definitely carnal and obviously carnality and spirituality are inconsistent states of mind. Carnality is a manifestation of a self-centered attitude. Now the Spirit of God can operate in one only if he is Christ-centered. Whenever one permits self to be predominant, he at the same time makes impossible the fullness of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is gentle as a "dove"; He possesses nothing by violence or coercion, but occupies only such dwellings as are yielded unto Him. The Holy Ghost is grieved by that kind of overbearing, self-assertiveness which is characterized by rude, idle, and contentious speech.

Lack of Faith

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit's fullness is hindered by

lack of faith. God's power operates in us in proportion to our faith. We dishonor God and grieve the Spirit of God when we distrust Him. Paul the writer of Hebrews says, "*without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 11:6). Further when admonishing the Romans, he says, "*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*" (Romans 12:6). Apparently the exercise of spiritual gifts is limited to the proportion of one's faith. If one lacks faith, he limits the Spirit's effective operation through him as an instrument. Now,

if through negligent and complacent living we permit the dissipation of our precious God-given faith, we need not be surprised if, along with our decline in confidence, we find a very noticeable diminution of the Holy Spirit's operation in us. On the other hand, if we yield ourselves instruments of righteousness, conquering our carnal tendencies, remaining instant in prayer, persevering in loving service, and exercising implicit faith in our Lord, we may be sure that the Holy Spirit in whose power we were baptized will constantly fill us and manifest Himself through us ". . . *Be filled with the Holy Ghost*" (Ephesians 5:18).

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Ask your class to reflect for a few moments on their own lives. What characteristics of the Spirit-filled life are not evident in their own walk with the Lord, as well as in daily living? Take time to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help them to yield every area of their lives so that they, too, may be "full of the Spirit." Encourage them to look for opportunities to share what they have learned in this lesson with someone else this week.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet.

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *May the believer enjoy additional fillings after he has been baptized in the Spirit?* _____

2. *On what does God's ability depend?* _____

3. *Why does evil speaking grieve the Spirit?* _____

4. *To what is the stimulating effect of the Spirit contrasted?* _____

5. *What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?* _____

6. *What are four sources of maintaining an experience of fullness?* _____

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

AIM: To fully understand that the "Fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance — should be put forth, cultivated, and diligently guarded as the resultant adornment, the constant eloquent and irrefutable evidence of a Spirit-filled life" — Declaration of Faith, Aimee Semple McPherson.

KEY VERSES:

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so that ye be my disciples" (John 15:2,5,8).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22,23).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Read Galatians 5:22,23 aloud. Direct the class to list the nine virtues of the fruit of the Spirit. Next to each one write a definition. Put a check by the ones that need to be more evident in that life.

If you are working alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that the true Christian life is characterized by the manifestation of certain virtues. Even the unconverted of the world look for these virtues in the person who professes Christ. Much of Christian preaching is devoted to the statement, cultivation and enforcement of the Christian standards. Frequently, the Christian's chief preoccupation is with the bringing out of Christian works in his life.

However, the true Christian virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of human effort. We have the fruit of the Spirit when we have the Spirit. We can achieve fruit bearing only by living in cooperation with the indwelling fruit-bearer. The more completely we are infused and empowered with the Spirit's presence, the more emphatic will be the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our living and working. Only when we are full of the Holy Ghost do we exhibit a full fruition of Christian virtues. When Christ is fully formed in us by the indwelling of the Spirit, true Christlike virtues will be the natural result — a result as natural as that of the growth of apples on an apple tree. If we are devoid of fruit, then we are obviously devoid of the Spirit of Christ.

Inasmuch as the Spirit, who has many operations, does truly dwell in the life of the genuinely regenerated person from the moment of his new birth, he can, indeed, and should begin to produce some fruit of the Spirit. The virtues named in Galatians 5:22,23, are not called the fruit of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but simply the fruit of the Spirit. On the other hand, if one is "full" of the Holy Spirit he will naturally bear more fruit of the Spirit.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR FRUIT BEARING

The New Birth

Inasmuch as all true Christian works are the fruit of the Spirit, the bearing of fruit must be conditioned upon the possession of the Spirit, or rather the Spirit's possession of the believer. Of course, inasmuch as all believers have the Spirit of God in some measure, all true Christians are qualified for fruit bearing. The amount of fruit bearing will depend upon the extent of the Spirit's operation in one's life. The fullness of the Spirit should produce a fullness and abundance of fruit. Now, we positively affirm that real vital union with Christ through regeneration is the basic qualification for fruit bearing.

Unbroken Union With the Vine

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What does God do to the branch that bears no fruit? Give Scripture reference.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:2,5,8).

These verses emphasize the tremendous importance of fruit bearing. Every branch in Christ, who is the true vine, is taken away unless it bears fruit. This refers to real Christians — or those who once became such — not to mere professing believers. The expression “in me” clearly shows that some who are taken away for failure to produce fruit were originally true branches, but they did not continue in contact with the source of life long enough to come to bear fruit.

We further note that it is the branch which is taken away, not the fruit. Verse five says, “*Ye are the branches.*” The people who say that they who are “once saved are always saved” would like us to believe that God rejects only the “fruit” of the apostate, but not the man himself. Nevertheless the Word says that the reprobate branch is removed and cast into the fire because it bears “*no fruit*” (1 Corinthians 9:27). It is true that we are saved by grace entirely apart from any consideration of works or personal merit, but on the other hand it is also true that those who are forgiven are expected to go and sin no more, bringing forth fruit indicative of repentance. If the branch does bear some fruit, the Father prunes it in order that it may bear more fruit. We so easily complain about the trials and tests of our experience as if they were some strange and contradictory phase of life, when the truth is that the fiery trials are the purgings and prunings of the divine Husbandman who is concerned about the production of fruit. (See 1 Peter 1:7; 4:12,13.)

We should be grateful to the Lord that He keeps us pruned of self, for otherwise we might be so unproductive as to be cast away.

In verse five we have a further step in maturity which is called *much fruit*. There is no place in the Spirit-filled life to stop and exult in past achievement. He who bears fruit must bear more fruit, continuing to abide in Christ until he bears much fruit. The Spirit-filled life is a continual growth in fruitfulness.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FRUIT BEARING

Of the Garden Not of the Workshop

The principle of fruit bearing is the principle of life. Fruit is not made, it grows. Samuel Chadwick in his book entitled “The Way to Pentecost,” says, “The most striking feature in the passage of Galatians of the contrast is the emphatic change from works to fruit. Works belong to the workshop; fruit belongs to the garden. One comes from the ingenuity of the factory; the other is the silent growth of abounding life. The factory operates with dead stuff; the garden cultivates living forces to their appointed end. Works are always in the realm of dead things. Every building is built out of dead material. The tree must die before it can be of use to the builder. There is no life in stones and brick, in steel joists and iron girders. They are all dead and in the process of disintegration. Nothing material lasts. Man’s best works fail and fade, crumble and pass away. The works of the flesh are the products of all the operations of the flesh . . . Fruit does not come of man’s

labour. It requires his diligence, but it is neither his invention nor his product. He does not make flowers. No skill of his brings the golden harvest of the fields, nor the luscious fruit upon the trees. When man has done all he can, then God begins and life proceeds. Fruit is God’s work. The phrase, “fruit of the Spirit,” assigns the grace of the Christian character to their proper source. They are not man’s producing.”

THE INCREASE OF FRUIT BEARING

A Christian increases his fruitfulness by meditation in the Word of God, by purging his life of all impurity, by abiding in the life of Christ who is the true Vine, and by seeking divine wisdom which reveals the true values.

By Meditation

The Psalmist said, “*His (the blessed man of God) delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*” Most of the world is seeking the counsel of the ungodly, the counsel of those who are renowned for their worldly wisdom, but such counsel is fruitless; it invariably leads to barrenness in spiritual values. The servant of God must be guided by His holy law. God’s Word is the finest textbook on spiritual horticulture. He who meditates day and night upon the law of the Lord, who saturates his mind with divine, living truth will certainly bring forth his fruit in his season. An abundance of meditation leads to an abundance of fruit bearing. There is no spiritual prosperity in the arid desert of ungodly counsel, but in the river valley of scriptural truth there is ever-increasing abundance. Meditation is always fruitful of something, and in it as nowhere else does one so unfailingly reap what he sows. Spiritual meditation definitely increases one’s spiritual fruitfulness.

By Prayer for Wisdom

James emphasizes a similar idea when he says, “*Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation (way of living) works with meekness of wisdom. . . But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace*” (James 3:12,17,18).

We must be on our guard not to be influenced by the worldly standard of values. In fact, it is very easy to be influenced by the worldly spirit which surrounds us on every side. We can overcome only by praying constantly for heavenly wisdom. Our victory depends upon our saturating our minds with spiritual wisdom which resists every suggestion of compromise. Heavenly wisdom is full of good fruits, and when pursued, leads to an ever-increasing fruitfulness.

By Abiding in the True Vine

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What is the extent of fruit bearing in the life of one who abides in Christ?*

A spiritual mind begets a spiritual life. If we abide in the true Vine, our strength, our thoughts, our motives, our desires, our words and our actions will come from the Vine. One who abides in the Vine cannot bear fruit other than that which is determined by the Vine. The perfectly natural result of abiding in the parent vine is the bearing of abundant fruit, a failure of which can result only if the branches are severed from the vine, or if the offshoots are left unpruned. (John 15:2.)

THE RESULTS OF FRUIT BEARING

Fruit bearing results in a personal satisfaction of having achieved a useful purpose. In a God-created world, where selfishness is ultimately self-defeating, one cannot be happy who lives unto himself. They only are happy in God's world who live for others. He who saves his life will, at last, lose it. A body of water which has only inlets, and no outlets, becomes a dead sea around which everything dies. The world is, unfortunately, peopled today with too large a number of beings whose only aim is acquisition, who think very little, if at all, of being a benefit to others. It does not surprise us that, under such circumstances, happiness is such an elusive objective, like something at the end of the rainbow. The person who bears the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, etc.) enriches society; moreover he enriches himself at the same time.

Jesus accurately paints the picture of the man who bears only the fruit of selfishness in Luke 12:17-21. The rich fool had lived only for self; he had stored his fruits away in preparation for a later life of ease and pleasure, but he had already worked himself to death in his own selfish interest. He who had no place to bestow his fruits never lived to enjoy them. The man of God never produced fruit for the storehouse; he never says, "I have no place to bestow my fruits." His barns are the lives of the needy, the widows, the orphans, the weary wayfarers. The man of God lives not for things, but for people. The man of God is never cheated, because his greatest joy and satisfaction are in bearing fruit for the benefit of his fellow man. The truly happy Christian is the one who, full of the Spirit of God, bears the fruit of the Spirit.

THE REWARD OF FRUIT BEARING

We might say, as has already been implied, that the fruit of the Spirit is its own blessed reward, which would be a statement of truth; but it would not be the whole truth.

They, in whose life is manifested the fruit of the Spirit, shall, in addition to present happiness, inherit the kingdom of God. Speaking of the works of the flesh, Paul says, "*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Now, the works of the flesh are their own punishment, in a certain sense; but being carnal minded results not only in unhappiness and unrest, but also in death — eternal death. On the other hand, the spiritual life leads to life eternal in the kingdom of God. In fact, those who bear the fruit of the Spirit are identified by their fruit as naturalized citizens of the kingdom of God.

VIRTUES OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Name the virtues or graces of the Spirit.*

Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23 is actually the Sermon on the Mount in a nutshell. It is the ideal of Christian living in its most concentrated expression. The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is merely an extension of this passage. Any concept of Christianity which does not have as its pattern of character the fruit of the Spirit is a false concept. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ produced by the Spirit of Christ in the follower of Christ. The greatest treasure of the believer is this golden chain composed of nine precious links on which is engraved, "*the fruit of the Spirit.*"

Love

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What is the principal fruit of the Spirit? How is it related to each of the others?*

Love is the cement which binds all the virtues together into a united whole. Love is the gem, the other virtues are its facets which are seen from different points of view. Love is the common denominator of all Christian character. One cannot have love and fail to have any of the other virtues. He who possesses all the virtues possesses love in its full manifestation. Paul could have said, "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and he would have said the truth. 1 Corinthians 13 definitely attributes to love (charity) all the virtues of Galatians 5:22. The fruit of the Spirit is a character completely pervaded by love for God, love for men, and true love for self. Joy and peace are love toward God; longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and faithfulness are love toward mankind; and meekness and self-control are true love toward oneself. The Spirit produces this fruit in the believer by shedding love abroad in his heart, with the result that all his motives and actions are an expression of Christian character.

Love Exulting - Joy

Joy is love's reaction to God's mercies, blessings, and benefits. Christian joy is not dependent, however, upon circumstances. The joy which is a facet of love trusts God even in the most trying circumstances. Human joy looks at things upon earth and is affected by the conditions of earth. Christian joy — a fruit of the Spirit — looks heavenward and is unaffected by surrounding conditions, because heaven's benefits are unvarying. Joy accepts trials as divine blessing in disguise. The true, Christian life is a joyful life.

Martin Luther describes Christian joy saying, "Joy means sweet thoughts of Christ, melodious hymns and psalms, praises and thanksgiving, with which Christians instruct, inspire, and refresh themselves. God does not like doubt and dejection. He hates dreary doctrine, gloomy and melancholy thought. God likes cheerful hearts. He did not send His Son to fill us with sadness, but to gladden our hearts. For this reason the prophets, apostles, and Christ Himself urge, yes, command us to rejoice and be glad. *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee"* (Zechariah 9:9). In the Psalms we are repeatedly told to be *"joyful in the Lord."* Paul says: *"Rejoice in the Lord always."* Christ says: *"Rejoice, for your names are written in heaven."* (Commentary on Galatians, translation by Theodore Grabner, Page 258.)

Love Reposing - Peace

Peace is deeper and more constant than joy. We are always rejoicing, it is true, but joy is meaningful only in the face of danger, peril, sorrow, and struggle. We are joyful because we are constantly gaining the victory over those things which beset us. Joy is not constant, but intermittent; it is like an alternating current of electricity. Peace is constant and settled, more like a direct current. Joy is as a stream; peace is like a deep lake.

Now, peace as it is applied here, perhaps means peaceableness toward others more than inward peace, although the two conditions are inseparable. All these graces in fact describe Christian character as it appears to and deals with other persons. Principal Sunday comments as follows: "It may be questioned whether 'Peace' is here the tranquility which is shed abroad in the heart by the sense of reconciliation with God, but rather from the context which follows, peaceableness toward men." Peace as an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, beyond doubt, means freedom from a quarrelsome, contentious, or party spirit. It means that temperament which seeks to live peaceably with all men. It is also true that peacemakers are persons who enjoy inward peace, and the contentious are persons who suffer with inward conflicts.

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Did Paul become impatient in his many persecutions? What virtue of the fruit of the Spirit did this exemplify?*

Love Persevering — Longsuffering

They who live at peace with all men are patient and longsuffering. Our peaceableness must not be conditioned upon equal peaceableness in others. The fruit of the Spirit is characterized by a peaceableness which perseveres in spite of the selfishness and belligerence of others. No one needs special grace from God to have peace with the peaceable; but to live at peace with the contentious, the suspicious and the envious do, indeed, require a special divine bestowal of grace. Patience is love persevering through the storms and the floods. Patience is a golden virtue, a pearl of great price. A patient man is richer than an oriental monarch. Perhaps no other virtue more surely marks a man as Christian than does that of patience.

Longsuffering — love under stress — was one of Paul's most sterling virtues. In spite of the bitter persecutions which he suffered at the hands of the Jews, he never became embittered against them as a nation, but rather held out hope always of winning them to Christ. Paul never became cynical or suspicious even though he was constantly betrayed or disappointed by those he thought to be friends. Jesus knew the deceit of human nature as no one has known it, but He never ceased to love mankind. Jesus died for man knowing full well the depth of his perversity. If we bear the fruit of the Spirit, it will be revealed in our unflinching patience and endurance in spite of the very worst men and demons can do. One will hardly succeed in any aspect of Christian service today without a real baptism of patience and longsuffering. When love "keeps on keeping on," it is longsuffering.

Love Forgiving - Gentleness

This word translated "gentleness" is nowhere else in the New Testament so translated. It is four times rendered as "kindness" which is perhaps the best representation of the word. This word is frequently used to depict the manner in which God deals with His people. Tradition tells us that Peter could never talk of the kindness of Jesus toward him without weeping. When we consider Peter's denial of Jesus and Peter's subsequent restoration, we can easily understand why he would be deeply moved by thoughts of his Lord's kindness. When we think of the kindness of Jesus toward us, we should be inclined toward kindness to others in spite of their faults. In fact, if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we will quite naturally bear the fruit of kindness, which is love dealing with others — especially with those who have in some way failed or offended. Luther comments on this virtue, saying, "Gentleness can overlook other people's faults, can cover them up. Gentleness is always glad to give in to others. Gentleness can get along with forward and difficult persons according to the old pagan saying: 'You must know the manners of your friends but you must not hate them'."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Can one be good in some things and bad in others if he is led of the Spirit? Explain.*

Love Acting - Goodness

Goodness is love in action. It is love heaping benefits upon others. This word may mean moral goodness, but it is generally used, as here, to mean "doing good." However, the Christian *does* good because he *is* good. We are inclined to doubt the goodness of any man who does not *do* good. Negative goodness (abstaining from all evil) is only one half of genuine goodness. The Pharisees were good in the negative sense, but they failed to produce any positive goodness. A person is not truly good unless he is good to his fellow men. Showcase goodness repels many, but practical goodness draws everyone. The goodness of saints secluded behind monastery walls is of very doubtful value. God's saints are not secluded, but sent to the nations. One day's goodness in the marketplace is worth a year's goodness on a mountain top. Goodness, which is an aspect of love, by its very nature, applies to human relationships.

Now goodness cannot be fragmentary. A man is not good if he is only good in some respects. The big city gangsters frequently attempt to justify their rackets by supporting institutions of charity or by giving free milk to the children of the slums, but no one will be deceived into calling such charity "goodness." Some feel satisfied because they are good on the Lord's day, but Sunday goodness is of little value if it is not followed by daily goodness. One cannot be good in separate compartments. Such occasional goodness is the product of imitation or of the human will; is not a product of the indwelling Spirit of God. When God's Spirit pervades every part of one's being, He works every kind of goodness, every day and to every man.

Love Trusting — Faith

The majority of translators render this word as "faithfulness." Principal Sunday, commenting on this virtue says, "Rather, perhaps, faithfulness; not here in the sense peculiar to St. Paul in which faith is the primary Christian virtue, but rather (as the context shows) 'faithfulness' or 'trustworthiness' in dealing with men, along with, perhaps, that frank and unsuspecting temper which St. Paul ascribes specially to charity (1 Corinthians 13:7)." According to this interpretation, one who bears the fruit of the Spirit will keep his word with others; he will be faithful to his covenants, promises, duties, and obligations. The true Christian does not shirk responsibility. Martin Luther interprets *faith* to mean, here, "trustfulness." In his commentary on Galatians, he says, "In listing faith among the fruit of the Spirit, Paul obviously does not mean faith in Christ, but faith in men. Such faith is not suspicious of people, but believes the best. Naturally the possessor of such faith will be deceived, but he lets it pass. He is ready to believe all men. Where this virtue is lacking, men are suspicious, forward and wayward and will believe nothing, nor yield to anybody. No matter how well a person says or does anything, they will find fault

with it, and if you do not humor them you can never please them. It is quite impossible to get along with them. Such faith in people, therefore, is quite necessary. What kind of life would this be if one person could not believe another person?" (Commentary on Galatians by Martin Luther; Translated by Theodore Graebner, Zondervan.) Both of these viewpoints are possible, and certainly trustfulness and trustworthiness are both necessary virtues. A true Christian will be neither unfaithful nor suspicious.

Love Condescending — Meekness

Meekness is slowness to anger and to take offense. The meek are not boisterous, noisy, nor selfishly aggressive. They do not strive, quarrel, nor contend. They are not argumentative nor boastful. Let no one, however, confuse meekness with shyness nor with the timidity which is characteristic of an inferiority complex. Spiritual meekness is not cowardice nor lack of leadership. Moses was the meekest man in Israel, but at the same time, he was the greatest leader. He was humble and patient, but he was also capable of firmness and great courage. Rather than being a disqualification for leadership, meekness is an essential to it. Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*"

Love Ruling — Temperance

Temperance, here, means full self-control. It means control over anger, carnal passion, appetites, desire for worldly pleasure, and selfishness. Before one can rule a city, a community, a club, a church or a nation he must first be able to rule his own spirit. Paul treats this subject admirably in his letter to the Corinthians. He says, "*All things are lawful for me?*" Yes, but not all things are good for me. "*All things are lawful for me?*" Yes, but I will not let myself be enslaved by the power of any. "*Food is meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food?*" Yes, but God will soon put an end both to the one and to the other. "*The body, however, exists not for immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body: and the God who raised up our Lord will upraise us also by His mighty power . . . Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is within you, the Spirit whom you have from God? You are not your own; for you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies*" (1 Corinthians 6:12-14, 19, 20 Centenary Translation).

Among the graces, none is more important than self-control. "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*" (Proverbs 16:32). Temperance is true self-love. He who respects himself, who considers his body to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, will exercise control over his impulses. True temperance is control over, not only food and drink, but over every phase of life.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Divide into nine groups and assign each group one of the following virtues of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Have each group plan a skit which first shows a situation where that particular virtue is not evident. Second, show what a difference it makes when that virtue is present in the life of a believer. Have each group share its skit.

If you are working alone, choose two of the previously mentioned virtues of the fruit of the Spirit. Think of a situation in your life when that virtue was not evident. Now write down on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson how that situation could have been different if that virtue had been active in your life.

The Fruit of the Spirit

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What does God do to the branch that bears no fruit? Give Scripture reference. _____

2. What is the extent of fruit bearing in the life of one who abides in Christ? _____

3. Name the virtues or graces of the Spirit. _____

4. What is the principal fruit of the Spirit? How is it related to each of the others? _____

5. Did Paul become impatient in his many persecutions? What virtue of the fruit of the Spirit did this exemplify? _____

6. Can one be good in some things and bad in others if he is led of the Spirit? Explain. _____

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Part I

AIM: To gain understanding of the gifts of the Spirit as set forth in the Foursquare Declaration of Faith: "We believe that the Holy Spirit has the following gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ: Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation; that according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient, these gifts are divided to every man severally as He, the Holy Spirit will; that they are to be most earnestly desired and coveted, in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the Church" — Aimee Semple McPherson.

KEY VERSES:

See I Corinthians 12:1-11; 12:28-31; 14:1-19; and Romans 12:6-8.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Everyone should have a piece of paper and be given about 10 minutes to complete the following activity.

How would you illustrate — in words or pictures — the way the gifts of the Spirit should be in harmony and work toward a common objective? (See 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.) Come on and use that creativity God has given you!

If there is time at the end of the lesson, the class members may want to share their thoughts and/or pictures with the class.

THE PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Biblical

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What position does the Foursquare Declaration of Faith take regarding spiritual gifts in their relation to the Church of today?*

We accept spiritual gifts as being for the Church today for the same reason that we accept the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and for the same reason that we accept divine healing. We believe that "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." We do not find one shred of evidence in the Bible to substantiate the argument that God intended that the supernatural should cease at the death of the apostles. All our teaching in the epistles relative to healing, empowerment of the Spirit, and spiritual gifts is given in a manner which suggests the permanence of these operations. If God had intended that the operations of the Spirit should cease, He beyond doubt would have inspired Paul or some other inspired writer to declare the temporary character of some operations and the permanent character of others that were intended to continue in manifestation. On what authority do some claim the validity of some spiritual operations and reject the validity of such gifts as healings, miracles, tongues and interpretation which are mentioned in the same verses along with the operations accepted by our critics?

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What Scripture passage is often quoted to support the theory that the gifts were only for the apostolic age? To what time does 1 Corinthians 13:8 refer when it says, "whether there be tongues they shall cease"?*

Now there is only one possible Scripture verse which can be interpreted in favor of our critics. Furthermore, they can use it to substantiate their position only by interpreting it out of its context. Now, the verse in question is 1 Corinthians 13:8, "*Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*" But let us continue in order to see when these things will vanish away. Paul continues saying, "*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" He further says, "*For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.*" When will that which is "perfect" come? Our critics say that "*that which is perfect*" refers to the complete canon of the Scripture. Now, this cannot be what Paul means, because the whole chapter is contrasting love with the various gifts of the Spirit. That which is perfect is "divine love." Now, inasmuch as love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, there is no reason to believe that there would be any more "love" after the death of the apostles than there was in Paul's day. Perfect love will be realized only when we are in heaven "*face to face.*" Paul's argument was that prophecy, tongues, and special knowledge were not to be esteemed

above love, for such provisions were for this life only while love would abide throughout eternity. Love is greater also than faith and hope (vs. 13) because these are for this life while we "see through a glass darkly," but love is eternal and will be fully realized when we see Him "face to face." Prophecy, tongues and special knowledge cannot compete with love, it is true, but during this Church age they are given for the profit and edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:3).

Historical

Some argue that history proves the passing of spiritual gifts. Such an argument is historically unsound. All the gifts continued for many generations after the death of the apostles and after the writing of all the New Testament books. It is true that many of the operations began to disappear after a few centuries, but that is not surprising. When the church became elaborately organized and controlled by the emperor, all direction of worship was circumscribed, and all services became formal. When worship becomes fixed and liturgical, there is no room for the Spirit's operation. If we are to conclude that everything which was lost or abandoned by the Church during the dark ages was really meant to pass away permanently, then why do we look to the Protestant reformation as a recovery of lost blessings and truths? If Luther is esteemed for his recovery of the truth of justification by faith, why are we opposed for the further recovery of spiritual gifts? If we are so supposed to leave tongues buried in the past because they ceased for a time, why do we not also leave justification by faith, spontaneous prayer, and congregational church government buried along with tongues and healing? No, we have recovered all "the faith once delivered unto the saints" and we do not intend to relinquish it. It is true that spiritual gifts are abused in some quarters and that fanaticism passes for gifts in some places, but such misuse does not invalidate the gifts today any more than similar misuse invalidated the gifts in the church at Corinth.

Experimental

Furthermore, the Church is the body of Christ which is one body. Christ does not have an apostolic body, a medieval body, and a latter day body. His body is one body. (See 1 Corinthians 12:12,13.) "We have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Therefore, what is edifying in one period can be edifying in all periods. If tongues are a sign to the unbeliever in Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:22) why may they not still be such a sign? Paul begins Chapter 14 with this command, "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts." If we reason that the gifts have passed away in the interim, how can we ever know which commands of the inspired Scripture are to be followed? Are we wrong if we desire what Paul commands us to desire? If God, who in His sovereignty, "divides to every man severally as He will," bestows upon us some of His gifts which we are encouraged to desire, why should anyone object? If we indeed do have these gifts today, then they are for today; experience proves it.

THE TEST OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Loyalty to Christ

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Here is a test by which it may be determined whether an ecstatic utterance is truly motivated by the Spirit of God. Here the test is given to distinguish between utterances prompted by the Satanic spirit and those prompted by the Holy Spirit. The test is that of loyalty to Christ. No one can in any way depreciate or slander the name of Jesus except as he is led by Satanic impulse. No one can say sincerely from his heart that Jesus is his Lord, but by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Of course, it is quite possible to exalt the human Jesus, or in parrot-like fashion repeat phrases and formulas, but all praise of Jesus, which is deeply sincere and spontaneous comes forth under the impulse and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it is the aim of the Spirit to bring out of all manifestations praise of Christ. We may rightly question the origin of prophecies or interpretations which are wholly condemnatory or composed solely of vain repetitions. If the Spirit is prompting one to speak, he will utter some praise of Jesus or in some way exalt Him who alone is worthy.

Love in the Assembly

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. . . How is it then brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Corinthians 13:1,2; 14:26).

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

From the One Spirit

Let us further observe the coordination of all spiritual things. Although there are many kinds of ministries, gifts, and operations; there is but one Spirit who is the coordinator of all spiritual manifestations. The Corinthians were in need of being reminded of this fact, for there was anything but singleness of purpose in their church affairs. Their disunity in loyalty, morality, doctrine, and worship betrayed their lack of coordination. When the Holy Spirit has full control of a church's worship, all will work in harmony toward a single purpose. We must be careful not to attribute to the Holy Spirit that which is conflicting in purpose.

Diverse in Manifestation

While there are many kinds of gifts, ministries, and operations of the Spirit, all are the work and function of the same Holy Spirit. That is to say that there will be no conflict, disharmony, or contradiction in the various operations of the one Spirit. The exercise of all true spiritual ministries will be in harmony and will work toward a common objective. One utterance prompted by the Spirit will not contradict another utterance prompted by the same Spirit. Two Spirit-anointed ministries will not work for conflicting objectives. The Spirit of God is not in competition with Himself.

Supernatural In Operation

Verses 4 to 6 classify the spiritual things (pneumatica). They are diversities of gifts (charismata), diversities of ministries, and diversities of operations (energizings, Greek: "energemata"). The spiritual gifts are supernatural capacities bestowed and made effectual by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts differ from natural talents for Christian service in that they are operative only by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual ministries are divinely appointed offices, the fulfillment of which depends upon a supernatural anointing. Spiritual operations are the powerful energies of the Holy Spirit by which the gifts and ministries are enabled to function. The ministry is the office, the gift is the authority, and the operation is the energy behind the office and the authority.

Bestowed as God Wills

God sets a man in an office, He bestows upon him the gifts appropriate to his office, and quickens him by means of the Spirit's operation for each exercise of the gift. God is sovereign in the appointment of offices and in the bestowal of gifts; however, we will be given gifts as a rule, only if we are desirous of them. We are exhorted to covet earnestly the best gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31).

THE OBJECT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What should be the objective of all exercise of the gifts?

Profit of the Church

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

The Centenary Translation of the New Testament renders this verse as follows: *"Now to each man has been given his manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."* No public manifestation of the Spirit is for the sole purpose of blessing or exalting the individual believer. Private blessings are for private devotions. No utterance should be given audibly in a public service

except what is spoken to profit the whole assembly. No utterance should be given which would profit the assembly less than that which is being given in song, sermon, exhortation, or testimony. The Spirit does not interrupt Himself. No utterance should be given in public which is unintelligible and therefore of no profit to the whole church. No utterance should be given in public merely because the individual worshipper wishes to express himself. All manifestations are for the profit of the whole body. However, gifted utterances, prompted by the moving of the Holy Spirit, and given by gifted persons who are sincere and above reproach, can be and frequently are greatly profitable to the church. Spiritual gifts definitely profit the church when they are in place, in time, in scriptural order and in love. Let us not discourage the gifts, but encourage the intelligent and scriptural exercise of the gifts.

Exaltation of Christ

The single purpose toward which the Holy Spirit guides all manifestation is that of the spiritual profit of the Church through the exaltation of Christ and the revelation of His glorious provisions. It is never the work of the Spirit to exalt persons nor to bring one office or gift into conflict or competition with any other office or gift. No manifestation, no matter how pretentious or unusual it may appear to be, can be called a manifestation of the Holy Spirit if it fails to exalt Christ or to edify the Church.

WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

We are instructed by Paul to covet earnestly the best gifts. However, who among us is to judge which are the best gifts? Perhaps the best gift or gifts for any particular person are the ones God in His providence bestows upon him. What is best for one person may not be best for another. We are safe to leave to God the choice of our gifts. On the other hand, we have every reason to believe that God will bestow upon His people the gifts that most clearly correspond to their callings and offices. Just as a man prepares himself by studying in the realms of knowledge or practice which most nearly relate to his vocation, so, too, we are most in need of spiritual capacities that prepare us or equip us to fulfill our particular divine callings.

If we are to judge, generally, which gifts are better, we, perhaps, may be guided by their order in the list. In the biblical lists of persons and things, the order is generally determined by the relative importance of the names listed. Furthermore, if we were to arrange a list of the gifts of the Spirit in the order of their importance, it would be very difficult for us to change the order used by Paul. If it is argued that the gifts at the end of the list are the most common and those at the beginning the most rare,

we answer that the most precious things are always the most rare. If the first gifts are the "better" gifts, then I fear we have not coveted the "best" gifts.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★How may we divide the gifts into groups?

No classification of the gifts into related groups has been made in the Scriptures, but we may easily discern certain family relationships. There are nine gifts listed by Paul in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians. Whether the list in verses 8-10 is complete or not we cannot be certain, for in Romans 12:6-9 the list of gifts differs somewhat, yet we are safe in accepting Paul's list in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, as the most clearly classified listing. A very logical arrangement is often made placing the nine gifts in smaller groups with three gifts in each group.

The main groups are: the gifts of insight, the gifts of power, and the gifts of utterance.

The Gifts of Insight — Wisdom, Knowledge, Discernment

There are three problems which arise in the study of the gifts of "*the word of wisdom*" and "*the word of knowledge*." These problems are: first, the nature of the wisdom and knowledge involved; second, the purpose of these gifts; and third, the manner of the Spirit's operation in the exercise of these gifts. We will try to keep these problems in view in the treatment of the printed text of the lesson.

First of all, let it be observed that the wisdom and knowledge imparted by the exercise of spiritual gifts differs from natural wisdom and knowledge gained by study and experience, in that the former is imparted by the Holy Spirit. One does not attain unto this kind of wisdom and knowledge, it is imparted; its source is not the seminary, but heaven; it is not natural, but supernatural.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Is there a difference between the gifts of wisdom and knowledge in the manner of their working?

Wisdom and knowledge differ one from the other in that one concerns facts, while the other concerns the analysis of facts and action upon the basis of the facts. Knowledge has to do with accurate understanding, while wisdom has to do with wise action. It must be added, however, that the difference at times is so slight that one may fail to distinguish it. The solution to our problems will become more clear as we study the other

Scriptures of our text, but it should be stated here that the exercise of these gifts of insight never take the place of the study or preaching of the Word of God. The Spirit does not reveal through the gifts that which the Word makes plain. Nor can anyone ever pretend to contradict the plain teaching of the Word on the pretense of special revelation through the gifts. The Spirit always confirms the Word, inasmuch as He is the author, both of the Word and the gifted revelations and utterances.

Now, concerning the nature of these gifts, let it be noted that they are not the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, but of "*the word of wisdom*" and "*the word of knowledge*." It is true that the emphasis is on the wisdom and the knowledge; however, the gifts function for the benefit of the assembly through the *utterances* of the wisdom and knowledge which is revealed. The Phillips translation renders 1 Corinthians 12:8 as follows: "*One man's gift by the Spirit is to speak with wisdom, another's to speak with knowledge.*" Conybeare's translation of the same verse reads, "*To one is given by the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, to another the utterance of knowledge.*" Inasmuch as all the gifts are for the profit of the Church, and never for the sake of the individual person who is gifted, the wisdom and knowledge must be *uttered*.

Now while wisdom and knowledge are similar in their nature, there seems to be a difference in the manner of operation of the two gifts. The *word of wisdom* is said to be "*through*" the Spirit, while the *word of knowledge* is "*according to the Spirit*," although the King James version does not reveal this difference in the original text. Young's Literal Translation reads, "*For to one through the Spirit hath been given a word of wisdom, and to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit.*"

"*Through the Spirit*" seems to indicate that the word of wisdom is given, as in the interpretation of tongues, by a direct control over the speech, in the exercise of which the gifted person is not aware of the exact content until the moment of speaking. "*According to the Spirit*" seems to mean that the knowledge, while supernaturally derived, and spoken with an anointing, is revealed to the mind of the person and delivered in the more deliberate manner of teaching. In the gift of the word of wisdom, the Spirit more directly influences the utterance, while in the gift of the word of knowledge, the revelation is to the mind and the utterance is not directly through the Spirit, but according to the Spirit. We must remember, however, that while all the gifts are supernatural in their origin and operation, they are not always necessarily spectacular, and their manner of utterance need not necessarily be in a different outward manner from Holy Ghost anointed preaching or witnessing. We do God injustice if we fail to recognize anything as supernatural which is not spectacular. God's voice has been known to be a still small voice. (Acts 6:3)

There are many occasions which arise in the work of the Church and in its meeting of new problems, when special revelations of wisdom are needed. The Scriptures do not deal with all specific problems which arise; therefore, the gift of utterance of wisdom is needed from time to time to guide decisions in church matters. This

gift has no relation to personal matters, for all gifts are for the whole assembly.

Colossians 1:28,29 — *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working; which worketh in me mightily.”*

James 1:5 — *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*

James 3:17 — *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”*

2 Corinthians 2:14 — *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”*

Romans 15:14 — *“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”*

Acts 5:3 — *“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land.”*

Acts 8:20, 23 — *“But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money . . . For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”*

The Gifts of Power - Faith, Healings, Miracles

Very often in the extension of God's kingdom in an unbelieving world, special operations of God's power are needed to demonstrate the Lord's nearness to and interest in humanity. Mighty works wrought in the name of Jesus were the credentials of early Christianity, and, in fact, have characterised every epoch of revival in the Church since apostolic times. That miracles were intended to accompany only the first presentations of the gospel is a theory nowhere substantiated in the Bible, and certainly not demonstrated in history. Did not Jesus, Himself, say in John 14:12: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”* We are still living in the age of the abiding Holy Spirit, we still need the empowerment which the Spirit bestows, and furthermore we observe that those who depend upon the Lord for the gifts of the Spirit possess and exercise them to the glory of God. That God heals the sick of physical diseases in answer to believing prayer is one of the cardinal doctrines of our church.

The Gift of Faith

“To another faith by the same Spirit . . . (1 Corinthians 12:9).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What kind of faith do they have who possess the gift of faith?*

Obviously the *faith* here described as a gift of the Spirit is a different exercise of faith from that of saving faith or other ordinary varieties of belief. Faith as a gift of the Spirit is extraordinary faith exercised for a practical purpose, for the profit of the Church. This faith (charismatic faith) is faith to do exploits in the path of Christian duty. It is active faith. It is not private faith; it is public faith. All the gifts (charismata) are for the purpose of profiting the Church. This is not the faith of doctrine, but faith to move mountains. Moses had this kind of faith when he led the children of Israel through the Red Sea in the face of an impossibility. Joshua had similar faith when he led Israel into Canaan's land against overwhelming odds. Gideon was moved by a like faith when he led a few men against a great army. David was similarly endowed with faith when he went against Goliath with a few stones. Paul was exercising the gift of faith, when in the face of shipwreck and disaster, he arose and said, *“Wherefore sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God,”* assuring the crew and passengers that there would be no loss of life. The gift of faith is given in order that the Church, in times of stress and difficulty, may be led forward to victory against apparently impossible obstacles or opposition. *“In nothing terrified by your adversaries.”* The gift of faith, no doubt, also operates in connection with those of healings and miracles. Many of the gifts are interrelated and overlap in their functions, for in the variety of gifts there is but one Spirit.

“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God (the faith of God). For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith” (Mark 11:22,23).

Many point to verse 22 of this portion as an example of the kind of faith implied in the gift of faith, with whom we are inclined to agree. This verse says literally, *“Have the faith of God.”* Paul in Galatians 2:20, affirms, *“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.”* The “charismatic” gift of faith is the impartation to one of God's own faith. All believers have *faith in God*, but those who have the gift of faith have the *faith of God*. Only a mustard seed of this divine faith is sufficient to remove mountains in the way of divine accomplishment. The world today is filled with mountainous barriers in the way of world-wide evangelization; yet if we have the *faith of God*, we will not doubt that these gargantuan obstacles can be moved in God's time and in God's way. Let us pray that God will bestow upon us His own faith. Having God's own faith is equivalent to seeing the victorious future from God's point of view.

“And though I have all faith, so that I could remove

mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2).

This chapter 13 clearly refers to the spiritual gifts. The argument is that one might have the gift of faith which is capable of moving mountains, yet fail to profit the Church or himself if he had not the fruit of the Spirit which is love. Paul obviously is quoting Mark 11:23, therefore we are certain that the "faith of God" which moves mountains is the type of faith imparted in the bestowal of the spiritual gift of faith. 1 Corinthians 13:2 is not belittling the gift of faith, but rather showing that love must be present with the exercise of all the gifts in order that they may be profitable to the Church and to the gifted person himself. Gifts without love are vain.

The Gifts of Healing

... to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ... (1 Corinthians 12:9).

Reference is made to the gifts of healing three times in chapter 12, and in each case both of the terms "gifts" and "healings" are plural in form. We are not scripturally authorized to say that any person has "the gift of healing." There is no gift of healing, but there are gifts of healings. No one is gifted in healing the sick in the sense that he can heal whomever he wishes to heal. God is absolutely sovereign in the matter of healing the sick; and although He works more through some human channels than through others, He alone determines who will be healed and in what manner. *Gifts of healings*, being plural in both terms, probably refers to occasions and seasons more than to permanent bestowals upon gifted persons. That is to say that no person is at all times and under all circumstance capacitate for healing the sick. Perhaps the reason why some gifted persons have more success in praying for the sick than others is that God most frequently bestows "gifts" of healings upon those workers who have *the gift* of faith. On this we cannot be dogmatic, because our information is meager; however, inasmuch as God is sovereign in healing, it is not necessary for us to know perfectly how He heals. We need merely rejoice in the fact that He does heal.

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, . . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:15,16).

It seems clear from these verses, which we often call the New Testament covenant of healing, that much ordinary healing in the normal church life is through the gift of faith, for it is the "prayer of faith" offered by the church elders which here heals the sick. The gifts of healings seem to follow most frequently the efforts of evangelists, pioneer workers and missionaries, who carry the gospel to new areas or to the great masses. Nothing gives greater success to evangelism or missionary work than general manifestations of healing power. In ordinary circumstances, we as believers call for the elders (pastors) who pray the prayer of faith. Many laymen also have the gift of faith, for we may be healed by praying one for another in the power of the Spirit. Anyone who is filled with the Spirit may pray the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. This verse

says literally, "*The prayer of a righteous man availeth much when it is energized.*" Gifted laymen also may pray the prayer of faith when their prayers are energized by the Spirit of God.

"And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed" (Acts 8:6,7).

The relationship of the gifts of healings to evangelism is here demonstrated. The people of Samaria gave heed to Philip's preaching when they saw the miracles of divine healing. Dispensations of healing power have accompanied great revivals throughout history. The greatest Pentecostal revivals of modern times have been characterized by healing miracles. How many of us would still be in the world of sin had we not been reached by a gospel of power which made us give heed.

"And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed" (Acts 28:8,9).

Here the relationship of healing miracles to missionary endeavor is demonstrated. The open door through which the gospel was given entrance to a pagan people was the healing of the father of the first citizen of the island. The healing of a tribal chieftain or other important person has often led to the conversion of a whole tribe or colony of people to Christianity. Furthermore, all our missionaries testify that God is mighty to heal in connection with their missionary labors. That gifts of healings occur more frequently in evangelistic and missionary work is perhaps proof that this gift is especially related to the advance of Christianity. For the healing of believers under ordinary circumstances, the prayer of faith is sufficient. This will explain why spectacular healings are not as common in our churches as they are in revival campaigns or missionary endeavors. This condition is not necessarily an indication of the lack of faith, but rather due to God's manner of working. Spectacular healings are not as essential to believers as they are to unbelievers. However, believers are regularly healed by the prayer of faith even though the operation may be often less spectacular.

The Working of Miracles

"To another the working of miracles . . ." (1 Corinthians 12:10).

The working of miracles is literally, "operations of powerful works." The powerful works wrought through this gift would perhaps, include the raising of the dead, the casting out of demons, instantaneous or spectacular healings, and miraculous alterations of circumstances. Some include no healings under the working of miracles, attributing all healing to the gifts of healings; while others insist that all healings that are sudden, spectacular and visible, such as the instantaneous healing of the crippled

or the opening of blind eyes, should be classed as miracles. As we have already pointed out, all these gifts of power overlap to some extent, and we cannot always determine which gift has been exercised. Furthermore, it is not important to distinguish exactly between the several gifts, because the same Holy Spirit is the author of all gifted works.

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11,12).

In Ephesus special miracles were wrought by the hand of Paul. It seems that there are special miracles wrought in the advance of the gospel which are more notable than ordinary miracles. God is sovereign in the working of special miracles and will bestow them in His own way and in His own time. No one can work a special miracle simply for the wishing. God's servants work miracles only when the Spirit of God comes upon them and moves them to work them. However, by the exercise of the gift of faith, ordinary miracles are wrought continually. We should not fail to see the hand of God moving supernaturally in what may appear to be ordinary. There are extraordinary miracles such as Paul wrought (or rather that God wrought in His sovereignty through Paul) in Ephesus, and there are ordinary miracles of faith which are common in the daily course of the work of the church. The day of miracles is not past. Ordinary miracles happen daily, while special miracles still occur whenever it suits divine providence to work them.

The Gifts of Utterance — Tongues, Prophecy, Interpretation

Even though some may have become confused and discouraged about the vocal gifts, we must obey Paul's admonition in 1 Thessalonians 5:20,21: *“Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings.”* There are two types of ministry for believers; the teaching ministry, and the inspirational ministry. A church which “teaches” only will be dry, while a church which is given only to “exhortation and inspiration” will be shallow and superficial. We must have a balance of the two ministries of teaching and inspiration. A church which is oriented on the basis of inspiration should give more place to instruction in the Word, seeking more the gift of the word of knowledge. A church devoted entirely to teaching should desire earnestly the inspirational gifts. Gifted persons who speak by way of prophecy or the interpretation of tongues speak to the edification, exhortation and comfort of the church. Teaching appeals to the mind while inspiration appeals to the emotions, and let no one despise godly emotion in the midst of a people whose strength is the *joy of the Lord!*

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

In this chapter three lists of gifts and gifted persons are

given and in each list tongues and interpretations occur last. The manner of expression of verse twenty-eight leaves no doubt that the arrangement is in the order of relative importance. We do not mean by this that tongues are of no importance, nor do we mean that they are to be ignored, belittled, or lowly esteemed; we simply mean that they are less important than the other gifts for the edification and profit of the Church. If, for instance, we made a list of precious stones, such as: rubies, emeralds, diamonds, sapphires and pearls, we would not mean that pearls were worthless, nor that they were to be lowly esteemed. Pearls are of great value and serve a purpose not served by other more costly jewels, but pearls are relatively less valuable than rubies or diamonds. Tongues are a precious manifestation of the Spirit; they are the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Tongues are, furthermore, a marvelous aid to private prayer and worship. In public worship they serve together with interpretation to edify and inspire as well as serving as a sign to unbelievers on certain occasions, but in public worship, they are of less importance than prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, and healings.

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Of the vocal gifts which is most to be desired? What is the definition of this gift?*

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Persons interested in spiritual gifts (as we all should be) must first follow after love until it is fully in control of one's ideas and impulses. Without love, gifts are valueless. When we are baptized in love, we may and should desire spiritual gifts. We are certainly not warranted in praying for one gift more than for another, but we are, indeed, justified in desiring above all, as members of a local church, that we may prophesy. Inasmuch as the discussion in this entire chapter seems to concern mostly tongues and prophecy; Paul probably means that between tongues and prophecy, we are most to desire prophecy. In most cases God seems to give believers the gifts they most persistently desire. The Corinthians desired tongues more than any of the gifts, because it was the most spectacular of the vocal gifts, with the result that tongues was the predominant gift in their church. The predominance of tongues in the Corinthian church made it an unbalanced church full of fanaticism and confusion in their public services. God gives us what we earnestly desire and leaves us to manifest our gifts according to scriptural common sense. *“And the spirits of the prophets are subject unto the prophets.”* God puts upon the believer the responsibility for the right and appropriate use of his gift.

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries”

(I Corinthians 14:2)

This verse explains why prophecy is more important in the public assembly than tongues. Tongues are for the purpose of speaking unto God, not unto men. The word "unknown" is in italicized letters showing that there is no word for "unknown" in the original writing of Paul, but we know that tongues are unknown, because they are not understood by men and must be interpreted in order that they may be profitable, except in cases where they serve as a sign to unbelievers. When we pray in tongues, speak in tongues in private devotions, or speak in tongues with interpretation, we are not speaking in an earthly language, but in an "unknown" heavenly tongue.

"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Here Paul explains why prophecy is superior to tongues. First, because he that prophesies speaks to men. Now it is important, indeed, to speak to God, but Paul's evaluation of the two gifts is on the basis of their relative worth as public manifestations of the Spirit. Tongues are of great value privately in worship, but in the Church prophecy excels because it edifies, exhorts, and comforts the Church.

Now this leads us to inquire what is the exact nature of prophecy. Paul gives in this verse an inspired definition. Prophesying is any anointed utterance in the assembly that edifies, exhorts, or comforts. Some say that anointed preaching or witnessing is not prophecy; but that prophecy must be restricted to short ecstatic utterances in which the speaker does not know what he is saying until the moment of speaking. We do not deny that prophecy may sometimes be of this nature, but we cannot accept such as the exclusive nor the principal manifestation of prophecy. It is our belief that prophecy may include and Spirit-anointed utterance in one's own tongue in which the Church is edified, exhorted and comforted. We, further, are of the opinion that the prophet may know in advance what he will say in substance. The prophetic nature of the utterance consists of its being anointed, and in its character of edification, exhortation and comfort. Of course, we do not mean that all utterance given by gifted persons, nor all preaching by Spirit-filled ministers is prophecy, but all utterances which fulfill the requirements of Paul's definition under the direct impress of the Holy Spirit is prophetic utterance. Undoubtedly our narrow, restricted view of prophecy has been the reason why we have valued tongues and interpretation above prophecy. We hear many more messages in tongues than we hear prophecies, and many of the so-called prophecies are only vain repetitions of Old Testament formulas which fail to edify the church as a whole. Prophecy should be common in the "saints" meetings of all our churches, contributed by Spirit-filled members, and given in a sincere and scripturally ordered manner.

"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church" (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Here again, the supreme test is applied to tongues and

prophecy with prophecy being judged best on the grounds that it excels for the edification of the many. The purpose of all gifts is the edification of the assembly. Tongues alone serve only to edify the individual. Now all of us need to edify ourselves in prayer and private worship in which tongues are a great boon, but such self-edification should be done in private or within oneself, not audibly. In fact, any sort of audible expression such as crying out, screaming private praise, et cetera, is out of place in public worship unless it can be interpreted for the benefit of all present. God's trumpet does not blow an uncertain sound. If anyone has a spiritual contribution to make to the service, let it be of the nature of prophecy, teaching, or exhortation. Mere noise has no value in itself in a public service. Of course all may sing, shout, pray, or praise in unison in a public service if the Spirit so directs or when the leader is so moved to request united expression.

"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (1 Corinthians 14:5).

We must repeat that tongues are precious, and not to be forbidden nor despised. Tongues serve their purpose and it is a precious purpose. Paul indeed wished that all spoke in tongues in order to be more proficient in their private devotions, but he preferred that they all would prophesy in order that the Church might be profited. When the apostle says that he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, he is not speaking of human greatness, nor greatness of rank in human esteem. We are not to think of gifted believers in the terms of greater or lesser in personal importance (1 Corinthians 12:20-25). He that prophesies is greater in the sense that he benefits the Church more by the use of his gift. If there is to be any judging as to which gifted person is greater than another it must be on the basis of which edifies the assembly more (1 Corinthians 14:12).

"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" (1 Corinthians 14:6).

When Paul came to the churches he came not speaking in tongues. There is not one case in the Bible of any apostle, prophet, or evangelist who addressed a church speaking in tongues. When Paul spoke to a church, he spoke by way of revelation, impartation of knowledge, prophecy, or doctrine.

"Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret" (1 Corinthians 14:13).

Tongues do have their place in public worship when they are interpreted in order to exhort or edify the church. Anyone who speaks in tongues (who has the gift of tongues) should pray for the gift of interpretation. If one speaks in tongues in a public service, he has the responsibility to interpret his message unless there is a regular interpreter present. Apparently we may pray for the gift of interpretation.

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful" (1 Corinthians 14:14).

Tongues are valuable in private prayer but in the church one ought to pray with the understanding. Apparently one who speaks or prays in tongues does not himself know what he is saying, for, his understanding is unfruitful. Sometimes the interpreter knows generally the content of the message while the message in tongues is being given, but usually the interpretation is entirely extemporaneous as moved by the Spirit.

"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Corinthians 14:15).

In private worship one may pray, speak, or sing in tongues in the Spirit; however, in the assembly one should speak, pray or sing with his own understanding. Vocal expression is not less anointed of God because it is with the understanding. Sometimes the Spirit anoints only the speech, sometimes the mind and the speech at the same moment, and often the mind first and then the utterance.

"Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" (1 Corinthians 14:16).

If the speech is unintelligible, one cannot say an intelligent "Amen" to what is said. Perhaps a word here is in order about saying "Amen" which means literally, "verily." It is good to say "Amen" when we are thinking what we are saying, and when the "Amen" has intelligent relationship to what the speaker is saying; but "Amens" said merely to seem "Pentecostal," to seem in the Spirit, or to fill in time are valueless or worse. Any of the precious things of God may lose their value if they become mere routine. Vain repetitions are to be avoided in preaching, praying, prophesying, praising or in saying "Amen" or "Hallelujah." Whatever we do we should do intelligently, harmoniously, and with due consideration for the proper time and place. Most preachers would prefer to hear no "Amens" than to have them said at the wrong time and with no thought. Let us not give up saying "Amen;" but let us say it with thought and sincerity.

"For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified" (1 Corinthians 14:17).

Even when we speak well under the anointing of the Spirit, we are justified in speaking only if it edifies the church.

"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Corinthians 14:18).

Paul did not despise tongues by any means. In private worship he spoke in tongues more than any of the Corinthians, but when he spoke in church services, his aim was that of teaching. Five words of teaching in a public service are worth more than ten thousand words

in an unknown tongue. Here Paul seems to bring into view the gift of the *word of knowledge*. We cannot overestimate the value of teaching in the spiritual development of the church. Churches organized solely around evangelism, where there is no teaching on doctrine or the deeper Christian life, are almost always shallow churches. The easy inroads made by false cults into the ranks of evangelical believers is a result of the neglect of spiritual teaching, and the low esteem in which so many hold the teaching ministry. The teaching service should be one of the best attended services in any church.

We conclude by repeating that these vocal gifts are to be desired. Of the three, prophecy is most to be desired. In the operation of all three the aim is the edification of the church. Tongues in public are always to be interpreted.

*Additional note on the gift of prophecy:

It will help to understand the gift of prophecy if we clearly define the word "prophecy." The Greek word from which our English word is derived means to "tell beforehand," or to "tell forth." The Old Testament prophet was both a *foreteller* and a *forth-teller*. But the principal task of a true prophet was that of speaking forth to the people, exhorting them to obey God, and to turn from their selfish ways. He became a foreteller, because in preaching to the people, it was necessary to predict the consequences of their continued sinning, or the reward of their turning to God. Prediction was the secondary objective of the prophetic gift. When the prophet delivered his preaching to the people, its content sometimes was given him at the time of speaking, and at other times God spoke to the prophet in advance of his speaking. Sometimes God anointed his mind first and his lips later, and in some cases God anointed his mind and his lips at the same time. In the New Testament order prediction has little place in the function of the gift of prophecy.

In the Church the object of the prophet's office is that of exhortation or preaching. The function of prophecy in the layman will be usually in the form of short utterances, while in the preacher or teacher, it will take the form of more extended and deliberate exhortation. Let no one misunderstand; we are not saying that all preaching is prophecy, nor that all exhortation is prophecy in the sense Paul meant in 1 Corinthians. The "*charismatic*" gift of prophecy always functions in anointed utterance which is prompted or energized by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual gifts are not natural talents or capacities developed by study or practice; they are supernatural, but why may not our preaching be supernatural? Why should not the preacher be anointed in prophecy during extended portions of his sermon when the objective is edification, exhortation or comfort? We must not conclude that all supernatural utterance is necessarily of a different character from truly anointed preaching. Such conclusions cause us to be blind to much that is truly supernatural.

Another error quite prevalent is that prophecy and interpretation of tongues, because they are supernatural utterance, must be in the first person, as if God's voice

were being heard instead of the voice of the person. Prophecy consists not of God's speaking directly, but the Holy Spirit's prompting the prophet to declare the will of God or the truth of God for the hearer's comfort. Most teachers and Spirit-filled leaders who have given deep thought to the gifts of the Spirit think that one should not speak as if he were God, saying for instance, "I the Lord say, etc.," but that one should simply speak what is the leading of the Spirit. If we say, "I the Lord" and speak what is not sound or true, we take upon ourselves grave responsibility. Nowhere in the New Testament do the

apostles speak saying, "I the Lord say," no, not even in infallible divine inspiration. Unfortunately many who bring a message intoning, "I the Lord say," bring a message unworthy of God, and often of no real profit to the hearers. Let us avoid vain repetitions of Old Testament phrases, speaking the prompting of the Holy Spirit sincerely without pretensions. If the message is of God, it will recommend itself because of the edification and comfort which it brings. Taking these counsels into consideration, let us desire spiritual gifts that we may edify the Church.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Ask your class to list the nine gifts of the Spirit, as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, dividing them into the three main groups. Next to each one write a definition of that gift.

This activity may also be accomplished by forming small discussion groups so that the people of each group may work together to discover the definitions.

*Take time this week to seek God regarding the gifts of the Spirit that are operating through your life and/or those you are desirous of...

If you are working alone write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Part 1

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What position does the Foursquare Declaration of Faith take regarding spiritual gifts in their relation to the church of today?

2. What Scripture passage is often quoted to support the theory that the gifts were only for the apostolic age? To what time does 1 Corinthians 13:8 refer when it says, "whether there be tongues they shall cease"?

3. What should be the objective of all exercise of the gifts?

4. How may we divide the gifts into groups?

5. Is there a difference between the gifts of wisdom and knowledge in the manner of their working?

6. What kind of faith do they have who possess the gift of faith?

7. Of the vocal gifts which is most to be desired? What is the definition of this gift?

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Part 2

AIM: To set forth as clearly as possible the scriptural regulations of the exercise of spiritual gifts and to understand the importance of balance in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also, to see the relationship of love to every phase of the exercise of spiritual gifts.

KEY VERSES:

See 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 14:26-33; 37-40.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-33, 37-40. On the back of the worksheet at the end of this lesson write a paragraph explaining what this passage is about and what you believe it is saying to us today. This activity can be done alone or in small groups.

A BALANCED OPERATION OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

(1 Corinthians 14:26-33, 37-40)

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Why does the Church need the full variety of the gifts?*

One of the crowning excellencies of the spiritual gifts is their variety. There is a spiritual gift corresponding to every form of worship, all forms of which are necessary to a complete well-rounded service of Christian worship. In the normal apostolic Church, all the gifts of the Spirit were in balanced operation; there was no great predominance of one gift over the rest of the gifts. The Church needs spiritual insight, spiritual power, and spiritual utterance. If the gifts of insight prevail, the church becomes excessively mystical; if the gifts of power prevail, the church leans unduly toward visible manifestations to the neglect of truth and the unseen values; if the gifts of utterance prevail, the church service becomes too wordy to the neglect of meditation and of practical works. The Corinthian church had overemphasized tongues to the neglect of some of the more edifying gifts. Paul's treatment of the gifts in the Corinthian letter was made with the object of bringing into view the full list of the gifts and of correcting the abuses which had developed through the fault of exercising one or two gifts to the neglect of the others.

Verse 26 — *"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying"* (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Paul here recommends that the gifts be exercised in their full variety, that the Spirit-filled believers yield

themselves to the Spirit's moulding in such a manner that each believer would have, in the service of worship, a gifted contribution to the edification of the assembly. One would have a psalm, one a doctrine, one a tongue, another an interpretation, and yet another a revelation. The sacred writer also makes clear that it is the responsibility of the gifted person to have his gift under the control of scriptural order in such a manner as to exercise it only for the profit and edification of the entire church. Along with each gift there should come also a spiritual insight enabling one to know when to speak in the Spirit and when to be silent, to know to say only what the Spirit prompts to speak, and to know in what manner to speak or act so as not to behave in a disorderly manner. The order of the Spirit is a beautiful order. Unfortunately, ignorant persons who exercise gifts without heeding sound Bible teaching often do so in a disorderly and confusing manner.

Verse 27 — *"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret"* (1 Corinthians 14:27).

Much confusion has resulted in the exercise of spiritual gifts due to an excess of speaking in tongues in public services. It has already been established that one should never speak in tongues publicly without an interpretation. One should never speak in tongues publicly unless he knows that there is an interpreter present or unless he himself interprets. This verse makes clear that there should not be an excess of speaking in tongues in our services, even when there is interpretation. The verse begins conditionally, *"If any man speak,"* etc. There will be many services in which there are no messages in tongues. It is a mistake to assume that every service must have a message in tongues, for there are nine gifts of the Spirit, with prophecy and other gifts being more edifying than tongues. Now in cases where there are messages in tongues there must not be more than three, and to avoid confusion the same interpreter must interpret all messages.

Paul's whole appeal to the Corinthians was for less

speaking in tongues in the public service. Now let no one take from this that Paul or that we are appealing for a cessation of tongues. The gift of tongues is a precious gift, but it is also a fact that any precious thing becomes commonplace when it is overdone. When a church has several messages in tongues in every service, they in time cease to be effective. The gifts of utterance are intended to provoke a deep sense of awe, to impress all with the sense of God's nearness, to awaken all to spiritual alertness; when such is no longer the result of the exercise of these gifts, they have become too commonplace. Paul said in verse nineteen that he had rather speak five words with his own understanding that he might teach and edify than to speak ten thousand words in an unintelligible tongue. We could add in harmony with his purpose that it would be better to have five messages in tongues in a year that truly edified and convicted of sin than to have ten thousand messages to which few gave heed. The value of tongues is not in their abundance, but in their purity and effect.

Verse 28 — *“But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God”* (1 Corinthians 14:28).

This verse definitely destroys the idea some have that one must always speak aloud when the Spirit of God comes upon him. When the Spirit of God comes upon one, he, himself, must determine by means of spiritual insight, and by means of scriptural knowledge, whether he is to give a message to the church, or to speak within himself to God. Every moving of the Spirit is not necessarily with the object of public utterance. The gift of tongues has two purposes; one, that a believer may more adequately worship God in private and, two, that he may give messages in tongues. Some public speaking in tongues should be directed to private worship rather than to the giving of audible messages.

Verse 29 — *“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge”* (1 Corinthians 14:29).

While prophecy is to be preferred to tongues, yet even the prophetic messages should be restricted to three. That is, not more than three prophets or persons with the gift of prophecy should speak in one service. This admonition has the same purpose as that in verse twenty-seven; that of guarding lest prophecy become too commonplace.

The fact that the assembly is instructed to judge the prophetic messages shows that no claim of infallibility can be made for gifted utterance. We are to *“prove all things and hold fast that which is good.”* If a message is not edifying, nor according to sound doctrine, or if it does not bear the witness of authenticity to the leader who has the gift of discernment, then it is to be rejected. No church is required to accept as divine, nor as binding, every utterance which pretends to be an operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Every message must pass the test of discernment and must be edifying to the church.

Verse 30 — *“If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace”* (1 Corinthians 14:30).

No one prophet has the unlimited right to dominate any service. One may speak only as long as he is edifying the church. If another who sits by receives a revelation of truth for the profit of the assembly, the first speaker is to cease speaking. Blessed is any speaker who knows when he has said enough. There is always the possibility that one may begin speaking in the Spirit, but continue to speak by his own spirit after the Holy Spirit has ceased to prompt him.

Verse 31 — *“For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted”* (1 Corinthians 14:31).

All the prophets in an assembly are entitled to speak one by one (not more than three in one service). The ideal order of spiritual operation is realized when all the gifts are in balanced operation, and when the majority of the members of the church are in possession of a gift. It is not a healthy situation in which the services of the believers are monopolized by one or two gifted individuals. The church learns most and is comforted most when the greatest number of its members are able to contribute something to the worship.

Verse 32 — *“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”* (1 Corinthians 14:32).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Does the Spirit speak through one against the person's will?

It is clear that the Holy Spirit, in all spiritual operations, works in conjunction with the spirit of the believer. The Spirit of God never uses the believer mechanically; He works through the body, mind, and spirit of the person, leaving him at all times the full exercise of his own faculties. No one can say that a spiritual operation was beyond his own control. The Spirit will not assert Himself through us even when He is quenched or grieved. The gifts, because they are gifts, are in the possession of and under the control of the gifted person. One is not quenching the Holy Spirit when he controls his own spirit.

Verse 33 — *“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints”* (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Of one thing we may be certain, that God is not the author of that which leads to confusion or disorder. One of the most frequent objections to spiritual gifts has been that they led to disorder, hysteria, or crude manifestations. Such is not an objection to spiritual gifts, but to fleshly manifestations. We believe in true spiritual gifts and we covet them for our churches, but we also know that true gifts are decent, orderly, edifying, and profitable to the church. Fleshly manifestations are prevalent only where the leaders do not teach the people the Word of God nor exercise the true gift of

discernment.

Verse 37 — 40 — *“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order”* (1 Corinthians 14:37—40).

Realizing the importance of right understanding of the gifts, Paul is careful to emphasize that his instructions are the commandments of the Lord. A church would be safer in neglecting the gifts than it would be in exercising them in a selfish and disorderly manner despising the teaching of Paul about their control. However, we must not neglect them, we must exercise them along with love, understanding, and obedience to divine commandment. Let us covet to prophesy, and let us not forbid to speak with tongues; but by all means in our churches, let all things be done decently and in order.

THE REGULATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Why is regulation of spiritual gifts important?*

The study of the regulation of spiritual gifts is a very important and at the same time a very difficult one. Our church believes in the possession and exercise of the gifts in our churches; it is the power and presence of the Holy Spirit which distinguishes us from other churches. We are as conscious of the need and value of the gifts as we have ever been in our history. We may, perhaps, feel the need of the supernatural in these times more than ever. On the other hand, experience has taught us that success in the exercise of the spiritual gifts depends upon their being regulated according to Paul's teaching. The manifestation of divine power always attracts some impressionable but misguided, selfish, or unbalanced persons who cannot or will not submit to scriptural order. Where there is lack of teaching on the gifts, sincere people often, for the lack of knowledge, react to spiritual operations in a manner that is not for the best interests of the church over a long period of time. It is imperative that we teach our people to properly govern themselves under the impress of the Spirit's power; but this is very difficult, for we do not want to give the impression that we are opposed to the manifestation of the power of God. It is difficult to discourage unprofitable and unedifying manifestations without discouraging the exercise of the gifts altogether. Our task will always be that of showing the need for the full-rounded operation of all the nine gifts, and that of showing the equally important need for the wise and scriptural regulation of them. Let no one say that we are opposed to the manifestations of the Spirit; on the other hand, let no one say that we are in favor of those

manifestations which lead to confusion, disorder, selfish competition, and indecent extremes.

The Possibility of Regulation

Some persons find it difficult to understand the need for the regulation of the gifts. They do not see how there is any need to regulate that which is of the Spirit of God. Such persons find regulation difficult to accept and to understand because they overlook the fact that the gifts of the Spirit are real “gifts” to the individual person, given to use for the edification of the Church. The power behind the gift is the power of the Spirit, but the exercise of the gift is the privilege and responsibility of the gifted person.

Although the Holy Spirit is a person and is the source of our power, He never takes from us the privilege and responsibility of the direction, control, and application of power for the profit of the Church.

Paul asserts very plainly the fact that *“the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”* Arthur S. Way in his famous version renders verse thirty-two in a manner that makes the thought very clear; he translates, *“I tell you, the spirits of the inspired speakers are under the control of the inspired speakers.”* In all inspired speech, such as prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues, the Holy Spirit operates and prompts through the spirit of the gifted person. Regulation is not control of the Holy Spirit, but control of our own spirits. If the Spirit moves one who has the gift of tongues, he may speak aloud, or if no interpreter is present, he may speak silently within himself to God. A gifted person is frequently in the Spirit, but he is not always required to exercise his gift publicly. Many mistakenly believe that a gifted person must speak or react vocally every time he is in the Spirit or moved by the Spirit. A gifted person can make use of his gift any time he is in the Spirit, but whether he does or not depends upon whether the church would be edified by its use at that particular moment or in that particular service. Often the Spirit's moving is an aid to private worship or blessing, and not intended to move one to the use of his gift.

This brings us to the discussion of emotion in relation to spiritual operations. In nearly every exercise of the Spirit's power there is an emotional reaction, both on the part of the gifted person and on the part of the other believers present. Such emotion may lead one to shout, cry, sing, lift his hands, or tremble. In some kinds of meetings and under some circumstances these emotional reactions are not objectionable; they may even at times, be an aid to worship, but we must not attribute what we do under emotion directly to the Holy Spirit. We must learn to distinguish between the Spirit's action and our reaction. The important thing is the profit of the church, not our feelings. Not all persons are equally emotional; not everyone reacts in the same manner to the same stimulus. If we are not careful, we may find ourselves judging another's spirituality by his emotional reactions.

Perhaps most of the disorder in unregulated meetings comes from excessive and unprofitable emotional ex-

pression. Such unedifying emotional expression indulged in for mere emotion's sake we call emotionalism. We delight in sanctified emotion, but let us so regulate its expression so as not to be guilty of emotionalism. Of course, some skeptics label all emotional expression and all gifted utterance emotionalism, but we do not accept the label. Such persons would call much in the book of Acts emotionalism. Our truly spiritual Full Gospel services are not emotionalism because we do not seek emotion for emotion's sake, but only as an aid to worship and a stimulus to work. We do not seek the emotion, but the power of God; the emotion comes as a result, and we try to govern its expression so as to edify the church.

The Object of Regulation

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What is the object of all gifts?

1 Corinthians 14:26 says, "let all things be done unto edifying." We have emphasized this idea repeatedly, but only that it may be duly taken into account. The exercise of the spiritual gifts are not given for the personal delight or exaltation of the individual person, but always in order that the person may advance the church. The combined exercise of the nine gifts possessed severally by all the members makes the Church a fully equipped Church. The many-gifted person must use gifts in harmony with the rest of the gifted members with one object in view, which is that of profiting the church as a body.

The Results of Regulation

When the gifts are properly regulated according to scriptural teachings, the result is a beautiful harmonious order of which no one may be ashamed. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. If we are ashamed to invite sincere unbelievers to our services, something is out of order. The gifts are given to make our services more effective and convincing, not repulsive. If our "so called" gifts are hindering our soul-winning, they are out of regulation. What God does advances the Church; it certainly does not hinder its efficiency. When we say "order" we do not mean man's order, but we do mean scriptural order. A truly discerning leader has the spiritual insight to govern the service if he will exercise it. The utterance gifts are for meetings of the saints principally, and their exercise must never carry the Church into an attitude which makes evangelism and missions secondary.

Hindrances to Regulation

Regulation of the gifts will be resented by two classes of persons: the ignorant, and the selfish who are unteachable. It is rather a simple matter to teach the ignorant, but only a firm hand backed by a holy life can deal with the unteachable. One characteristic of a truly spiritual person is humility. A humble person does not take

offense when he is corrected or advised. There were some persons at Corinth who were reluctant to accept Paul's teaching on the regulation of the gifts of utterance. The apostle wrote verse thirty-seven for their benefit, which reads, "Let whoever imagines that he is an inspired preacher, or endowed with spiritual gifts, give proof of it by recognizing the commandments of our Lord in what I now write to you. But if any one says, 'I fail to perceive that,' even let him rest complacent in the ignorance which simply proves non-inspirational" (Way's Translation of 1 Corinthians 14:37).

LOVE'S RELATIONSHIP TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians shows love's relationship to what?

In their services, there was no timidity nor lack of vocal expression; their meetings would have been called by many "powerful" and "spiritual," but to a more discerning and truly spiritual person, such as Paul, their speaking, shouting and exhorting had the sound of clanging brass. Their "messages" resembled the sound of clashing cymbals more than that of a meaningful trumpet call, especially when they were wrangling over personalities, disputing over non-essential questions of meats, special days and minor doctrines.

Inasmuch as all the gifts were always to be exercised for the profit and edification of the Church, their value must be judged by the effect they have upon the body of believers. If the exercise of a gift brings no profit, edification, or comfort to the assembled Church, it is of little or no value. It is not enough that the exercise of a gift bring a blessing to the person who exercises it; the gift must bless the assembly of believers. A mature Spirit-filled believer has no desire to speak nor act in a public service unless that which he contributes is a blessing to the rest. To persist in unedifying manifestations is to display selfishness, no form of which is commendable, whether in church or out of church. Now Paul expressly declares that tongues as well as any other type of gifted utterance has the effect of sounding brass or a clanging cymbal when it is not backed by love. Gifted utterance, even when it is genuine, is always colored, modified, or affected by the character and attitude of the gifted person. The ability to exercise spiritual gifts is definitely no guarantee of holiness, nor perfect character. The gifts of God are without repentance and are frequently exercised by persons who have receded from their original fullness and from their first love. In the apocalyptic letters to the seven churches, the church at Ephesus is reproached for having departed from her first experience which was, as always, characterized by pure, sincere love. When a gifted person departs from his initial state of love for God and men and zeal for soul winning, his public utterances

become distinctly brassy. Too many today have settled down into a state of chronic blessing seeking, attending the meetings to hear and be heard, to see and to be seen, with the result that their so called "power" is little more than brassy clamor. The effect of gifted utterance is blessed only when the gifted person is motivated by and filled with divine love.

Love's Relationship to the Gifted Person

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2).

The previous verse pointed out the effect of the exercise of the gift of tongues without love. Verse two shows the uselessness of one who has the gift of prophecy, or of wisdom, or of knowledge, or of faith without love. Love is as essential to the profitable exercise of one gift as it is for that of any other; no gift makes one anything in the eyes of God, if he is devoid of love. In God's eyes we are judged to be something on the basis of our fruit rather than on that of our works or gifts. He who prophesies without love is only nagging. He who reveals mysteries devoid of love is only parading his knowledge. He who moves mountains without doing it out of love for God's cause is only making a futile display of power. In God's vocabulary, love is a higher word than power, wisdom or eloquence. Jesus had supreme power, infinite wisdom, and unparalleled eloquence, but had He not possessed His matchless, sacrificing love, He would have ranked little higher than the ancient magicians, philosophers, or orators. Jesus was the greatest prophet, the greatest teacher and the greatest miracle worker of all time, but we serve Him and acclaim Him as Lord not because of those attainments, but because He was and is the loving Saviour who died for us upon the cross. Certainly we cannot hope to be anything, no matter what our gifts may be, unless we are completely baptized in divine love. Power, wisdom, and eloquence may gain for us the admiration of men but not their love; only love begets love. Let us not be so taken up with the personal blessing of the saint's meetings that we neglect the loving service of soul winning.

Love's Relationship to the Gifted Person's Reward

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3).

This verse warns of those acts which are only an imitation of love. It is possible to give everything to charity, yes, even to give one's self in martyrdom without having real love. One will be rewarded only for those acts of sacrifice which are performed without regard for self-interest.

When we stand before the great tribunal of God, no list of works, achievements or gifts will enhance our reward. The omniscient judge will reward each of us in proportion to the sincere love behind our works and gifts. Many who will have worked miracles will vainly petition for admittance into heaven. Certainly many indifferent

and self-centered believers will, if they enter heaven, receive no other reward than mere admittance, among whom will be counted gifted persons, leaders and ministers. Unless we are prompted by love to serve God and mankind, we labor in vain. All that is done merely for display, world honor, material reward or the applause of men will lose its reward in heaven.

Love's Relationship to the Gifted Person's Behavior

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★What are some evidences of love?

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Now that we have seen how indispensable love is for the exercise of spiritual gifts, let us observe how Paul, writing by inspiration, defines love. We want to know how we can be sure that we possess love. We, further, wish to know how to tell when we are becoming devoid of love. When one possesses love, there are certain unfailing indications of love in his behavior, but when one is devoid of love, there are equally unmistakable evidences of its absence as the motive of his acts and words.

First of all, love is patient and kind. When love exhorts, the exhortation is not condemnatory and destructive, but entreating and constructive. Some prophets cannot exhort weak Christians without crushing and destroying them. God, because He loves us, warns of sin, but God patiently loves the sinner. Those who have the gift of prophecy should remember that they are New Testament prophets. New Testament prophecy exhorts, but it also edifies and comforts (1 Corinthians 14:3). Love causes the prophet to be concerned more with the welfare of the persons addressed than with the message itself or with the credit for speaking. Love views the end more than the means to the end. Furthermore, love keeps one sweet even when his prophecies are ignored or when they are not appreciated. Nothing is a better indication of love than patient kindness in one's dealings with others in God's behalf.

As soon, however, as love departs, certain signs begin to appear. Perhaps the first signs to indicate the absence of love in the exercise of the gifts are those of envy and pride. The loveless prophets begin to envy those whose messages are more eloquent or to assume an attitude of superiority over the Church because of their gifts. Humility always departs with love. Woe unto the Church when the prophets are inflated with their self-importance. Woe to the Church when each prophet is envious lest another speak more frequently than he. Blessed is the Church whose prophets, filled with love, speak only to profit the Church, whose gifted speakers know when to speak and when to refrain from speaking.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Spirit-filled persons who are filled with love do not "get out of order" in unbecoming manifestations. Unscriptural manifestations are motivated by a desire to be seen or heard, indicating that the person involved is lacking in love or knowledge of the Word. Sometimes persons who behave out of order are sincere, but ignorant of sound Full Gospel doctrine. They are persons who are doing what they have seen others do. We must not say that they are not in the Spirit. Perhaps God's Spirit is indeed moving upon them, but ignorantly they are reacting to that moving in an unprofitable manner. Verse five further describes the reaction of persons who are sincere but misled. They seek not their own, nor are they easily provoked by corrective teaching. Love makes one teachable and void of offence when he is set in order by the discerning leader. Insincere persons become angry when they are corrected or set in order. They impute wrong motives to the leader and often accuse him of putting his hand on the Spirit of God. If the leader is wrong, God will deal with him; it is the responsibility of love-motivated persons to keep order under the direction of the leader. Leaders are not always right, but they are appointed of God to shepherd the flock, without which there could be no order nor disciples in the church. It is much better to submit humbly to the order of the leader than to cause contention and divisions by continuing questionable manifestations. By no means should one impute evil motives to our leaders, for only God can justly judge motives. If one becomes contentious over his pet manifestation, he is obviously devoid of love; and even if he were in the Spirit, his manifestation would not profit the Church. If one becomes angry because his manifestation is not allowed, he is seeking his own rather than the profit of the assembly. Love, without fail, is humble, teachable and subject to discipline.

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

Often when there are contentions and divisions in a church, when persons are motivated not by love, but by a zeal for the prevalence of their own party, there is a tendency to rejoice over personal and party victories, even when truth and justice suffer. One should never rejoice about a personal triumph over other Christians; one should rejoice rather over the triumph of truth, even when he himself has been convinced of wrong or error. God is not at all concerned with the triumph of parties, nor with the contention of one or another in a carnal dispute; God is concerned only with the triumph of truths. When believers quarrel, both parties are against the Lord.

"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

The meaning here is that love holds out against all bad news, refuses to believe evil against a brother, never accepts the dark side of the picture as being the final condition. Love never gives up in the quest of victory,

nor counts any work as hopeless. Love keeps on believing and hoping against hope. Those who love know that love is a winner, that it pays to act out of love even when contention and competition seem to be prevailing. Love continues indefinitely to permit personal interests to be invaded knowing that God's paydays, though long delayed, are sure.

Love's Relationship to the Gifts Themselves

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

The spiritual gifts, though precious as instruments of worship and work during this age of the gospel, will some day have served their usefulness, but love will, throughout eternity, continue to be the greatest of all fruits. Love is more important than any gift because love is eternal, while the gifts are temporary. To miss the gifts is to miss a glorious blessing and capacity in service; but to miss love is to miss heaven. To have a gift is good, to have love, is better, but the best of all is to have a gift which flows out of love.

Love's Relationship to Christian Maturity

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:11,12).

Love is the crown of Christian maturity. Perhaps we will never have perfect love, until we know also as we are known in the presence of our heavenly Father, but certainly our aim in this world is progress in love, and our ultimate goal is full, divine love. If we are devoid of love we are immature, childish, and stumbling. Love brings more mature thinking, acting, and speaking. One's maturity, indeed, can be judged by his ability to adjust himself in society and become an unselfish contributor to the mutual well being. Christian maturity means also adjustment among believers and their mutual love and blessing.

Love's Relationship to the Eternal Virtues

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

A final incentive for seeking love is given in verse thirteen, in which love is declared to be the greatest even among the virtues that abide eternally. In the company of such everlasting qualities as faith and hope, love takes the precedence. The gifts are greatly needed in all the churches, but they will be in vain unless they are prompted by and governed by divine love. Let us have gifts, but let us have them in their proper perspective. Gifts do not belong at the center of our worship; love must be at the center accompanied by zeal for soul winning. A church where love and soul winning are supreme never abuses the gifts. Only a

great general outpouring of love into Christian hearts will cause the revival we so urgently need. "Covet

earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31).

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Love has been aptly called, "The Greatest Thing in the World." Turn to your neighbor and share why you believe this is true, remembering to include thoughts on the importance of love's relationship to spiritual gifts.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

Now, pause and ask the Lord Jesus to help you to be full of love in every area of your life . . .

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT PART 2

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Why does the Church need the full variety of the gifts? _____

2. Does the Spirit speak through one against the person's will? _____

3. Why is regulation of spiritual gifts important? _____

4. What is the object of all gifts? _____

5. Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians shows love's relationship to what? _____

6. What is the effect of tongues without love? _____

7. What are some evidences of true love? _____

DIVINE HEALING

Part 1

AIM: In the next two lessons we will take a look at divine healing, one of the four cardinal doctrines of the Foursquare Gospel. We will cover the meaning, assurance of, conditions for receiving, and the result of divine healing. In addition, we will view divine healing and its place in the Old Testament, Gospels, Book of Acts, and in the atonement. We will also gain an understanding of the New Testament Covenant, as found in James 5:13-18.

KEY VERSES: See Psalm 103:2-3; Matthew 8:17; Mark 16:17, 18; and James 5:13-18.

OPENING ACTIVITY: On the back of the worksheet at the end of this lesson complete the following statement: "I believe in divine healing because. . ." Be specific in your answer. If this lesson is being studied in a class setting, have some of the students share their answers. (Hopefully, by the end of Lessons 7 and 8 they will have a better understanding of why they believe in divine healing.)

INTRODUCTION

"We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will." — Declaration of Faith, Aimee Semple McPherson.

Divine healing is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Foursquare Gospel. Not unimportant among the relationships of Christ to the believer is that of bodily healing. In our opinion no gospel is a full-gospel which overlooks, belittles, or denies the doctrine of divine healing. One of the big factors in the growth and rapid spread of the Foursquare Church and the other Pentecostal movements is that of the preaching and practice of divine healing. We believe that it is the duty of the Christian Church to be very active if not to take the initiative in the cure of the sick. Unfortunately, the Church, little by little, has relinquished many of its original functions. The churches have turned education over to the state, charities and benevolence over to the lodges and charitable societies, judgment of grievances over to the courts, and the healing of the sick over to the hospitals and secular physicians. We are not opposed to these secular institutions entering fields once occupied largely by the Church. There is much to be done and every organized effort to alleviate human suffering and to solve social problems is more than welcome, but we do lament the fact that the Church has retired almost completely from so many areas where it once took the leadership. The hospitals and doctors are more than welcome in our society; they are, in fact, positively essential to the people's well being, a fact no thoughtful person will deny. However, it was not, and is not the will of God that secular, and sometimes unbelieving physicians should be the sole administrators of physical healing. The children of God

should have the privilege of calling upon the elders of the church who will pray the prayer of faith in a spiritual atmosphere, who will tend to the patient's spiritual ills as well as his physical ills. The Church has no right to reproach our country for being unchristian when it has neglected a large part of its duties and become little more than the perpetrator of religious ceremonies.

Furthermore, when the orthodox church ceased to preach divine healing, a number of healing cults sprang up to fill the vacuum, which were Christian in name only. The negligent, orthodox church is indirectly responsible for the existence of the healing cults which deny the existence of sickness, sin, and evil, while rejecting Christ's finished vicarious work of redemption. The orthodox ecclesiastical bodies can gain their lost prestige and leadership in human affairs only by accepting again the responsibilities fulfilled by the apostolic church. We are happy to say that divine healing is being more widely practiced throughout the many branches of the Church than ever before in modern times. The truth will prevail. Reality cannot be forever overlooked.

THE MEANING OF DIVINE HEALING

"We believe that divine healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer. . ." (Declaration of Faith).

Biblical divine healing is centered in the Lord Jesus. The apostles healed only and always in the name of Jesus. Anointing with oil is to be done in the name of the Lord. It is the good pleasure of the Father to bestow all benefits by the virtue of faith in His blessed Son.

Just as Christ was active in the creation of the world and of man, and is now active in the preservation of all things (Colossians 1:16-17), so also is Christ Jesus active in the healing of our sicknesses. Now the power that heals is bestowed in answer to prayer. The only requisites demanded of the seeker for divine healing are asking and believing. All things are possible to him who

believes. So be it unto us according to our faith. *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord"* (James 1:6, 7). *"Ye have not, because ye ask not"* (James 4:2). (See also, Luke 11:9.) Only two things can hinder God's bestowal of bodily healing — failure to ask, or failure to believe what we ask. Asking selfishly can hinder God's answering prayer, but it is to be doubted that one can ask selfishly and at the same time pray the prayer of faith. There are three clearly marked ways to pray for and receive divine healing: (1) call for the elders of the church, who augment and inspire the faith of the seeker, and whose prayers also avail much; (2) pray for one another, for the Lord has promised to be where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord agreeing as touching what they shall ask; (3) call upon the Lord directly, for the Lord has promised that if we shall ask anything in His name, He will do it. However, when we approach the matter of healing, two things are essential: that we ask, and that we believe.

THE ASSURANCE OF DIVINE HEALING

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★How do we know that God does not change?

"We believe. . . that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble. . ." (Declaration of Faith).

We believe in the same kind of divine healing administered by the Lord Himself when He healed the lame, the palsied, and the blind; in the same healing He promised would follow them who believed; in the same healing performed by Peter, John and Paul; in the same healing implied in the gifts of healing; in the same divine healing that continued in the early Church; and in the same divine healing practiced by Luther, Zinzendorf, and Wesley et al. Divine healing has not changed nor diminished because the Lord is eternally the same; and, until the Saviour comes again, the needs of humanity will be the same. We look with suspicion upon any kind of so-called divine healing system or philosophy purported to have been discovered in recent times, or to have come from mystical extrabiblical sources. The healing blessing of Him who changes not is still the same simple blessing, bestowed in the same simple manner as that of the Bible. Our ministers who pray for the sick do not do so because they have mastered a philosophical system, but because they have been filled with the Spirit of God; the same Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

Because the Lord is ever the same, He has not ceased to bestow healing in the same direct and simple manner.

Some who believe that God still heals, nevertheless believe that the manner of reception has become more indirect and philosophical. The divine healing in which we believe is by the same power of the same Lord, bestowed in the same fulness in answer to the same prayer of faith. (See Hebrews 13:8 and Exodus 15:26.)

Sickness occasionally may be a permitted discipline, but generally speaking sickness is a trouble out of which the Lord is willing and eager to help us. Even sickness as a discipline should not endure always, for a discipline is useless that cannot be removed as soon as the maturity is reached. Sickness is not the normal condition of the body. It is nearly always a greater hindrance to spirituality or service than it can be a stimulus. Out of such abnormal states, called trouble, the Lord will and does help us. If we call upon the Lord in the day of trouble, He will deliver us, according to His Holy Word. Now it cannot be denied that God sometimes permits and uses trouble, as in the case of Job and Paul, but the day of trouble's value soon passes and deliverance comes as it came to Job and to Paul. Of course there are some mysteries connected with human suffering and divine providence that we cannot understand nor explain. We do not call God's ways into question, but normally, every believer trusts in the ultimate, glorious deliverance of the Lord. The eternal Lord is "Jehovah-Rapha," the Great Physician.

THE RESULT OF DIVINE HEALING

"We believe. . . that He is. . . able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit" (Declaration of Faith).

God is not Lord of the soul and spirit only; He is also Lord of the body. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. Christ's redemption, by which we are "brought with a price," includes our physical bodies. The Lord bases His demand upon our bodies for holy living, upon His purchase of them. We are exhorted to glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirit. (See 1 Corinthians 6:20.) Now, if redemption includes our bodies, then God has an interest in the health of our bodies. If we are required to live and treat our physical being in a manner so as to preserve them and to keep them sound, cannot we expect help from the Lord if our bodies are attacked by disease or suffer organic failure? The apostle Paul, indeed, plainly declares that there is constant quickening from heaven for the mortal body, as well as for the soul and spirit. *"If the Spirit of God, of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, has His home in you, then He who raised the Messiah, Jesus from the dead will thrill with a new life your very bodies — those mortal bodies of yours — by the agency of His own Spirit, which now has His home in you"* (Romans 8:11, Arthur S. Way's translation). When God bestowed His Spirit upon the believer He made thereby provision for the quickening of the believer's body. We not only may enjoy divine healing, but also divine health; if we honor our bodies, preserve them in holiness, and devote them to God's service.

THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING DIVINE HEALING

"...in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will" (Declaration of Faith).

There has been some discussion of whether one need include in a prayer for healing, the provision, "*If it be thy will.*" Now of course every sincere believer is willing for God to have His will. If it can be shown that sickness is better for us than healing, we will be resigned to sickness; but if healing is purchased for us, as the Word declares, and promised to the Church as a divine provision of the unchanging God, then we will boldly ask the Lord to heal us, assuming, on the basis of Scripture, that it is His will. Must we doubt the will of God to do something He has promised? Do we pray, "Lord save me if it be Thy will?" "If's" defeat faith. We cannot take a benefit by faith if we doubt its availability. We ought, however, to discover whether a matter is according to God's will before we begin to pray. If sickness is a discipline or a punishment, then one ought to pray first for guidance into victory or into maturity, after which he may pray for healing. If we are in doubt about the nature of a sickness, we can pray for insight into the trial. If one feels that sickness is a temporary testing, he ought to pray for grace to bear his trial. But, normally, one need not pray "if," but he may assume that God desires to fulfill His promises.

DIVINE HEALING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Where do we find the beginning of all New Testament doctrine?

Divine healing in the Old Testament may seem to some to be an unimportant consideration. Nevertheless it is far from unimportant. All great New Testament truths have their roots in the Old Testament. Furthermore, all the great benefits and blessings which are enjoyed by the believers under the covenant of grace were previously bestowed in some measure upon the faithful in Israel.

It is both important and interesting to trace the progressive unfolding of God's revelation of Himself and His benefits. In every dispensation God makes Himself better known to His people. In the final age we will see Him face to face. Further, the benefits of God become more fully and more generally bestowed in each successive age, until at last, they will be bestowed without measure. Inasmuch as divine healing is bestowed in the Old Testament in some measure, we expect it to be bestowed in fuller measure in the present age. If God is Jehovah-Rapha (the Lord that healeth) in the book of Exodus, He cannot be less than the Great Physician in this dispensation of His fuller revelation.

Examples of Divine Healing in the Old Testament

- Shunammite Woman (2 Kings 4:17-37).
- Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14).
- Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:1-5, 21).

Divine Healing in the Old Testament Differs From That in the New Testament

Divine benefits differ from age to age simply in the covenant conditions upon the fulfillment of which they are bestowed. Under the Mosaic covenant, healing as well as other blessings, was dispensed to those who kept the commandments. Divine benefits are now concentrated in the person of Christ and imparted in response to faith in His name. The lame man at the Beautiful gate was healed by the same power that healed Hezekiah, but the lame man was healed through faith in the name of Jesus. According to the Old Testament healing covenant, the Israelite was promised on the condition that he would "*diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, . . . do that which was right in His sight, . . . and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes.*" According to the New Testament healing covenant, it is the "*prayer of faith*" that shall save the sick, faith in the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. All healing is now made available through Christ. The promise of Jesus is, "*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*" (John 14:14).

It might be said that the healing differs in the two Testaments in the same way that salvation differs. The Israelite qualified for salvation and healing by the performance of works; the New Testament believer qualifies for either benefit by the exercise of faith in the virtue and efficacy of a finished work performed once and for all by Christ.

Divine Healing in the Old Testament Is Similar to That in the New Testament

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★How is divine healing in the Old Testament similar to that in the New Testament?

Manifestation of God's Mercy

It is perhaps, more important for our purposes to note how divine healing is similar in all the dispensations. The God who is ever the same, who changes not, bestows similar blessings upon His covenant people in all ages. In all periods of sacred history, God has healed in response to sincere and earnest pleas for pity, mercy, and deliverance. Great is the compassion of the Lord from age to age. Hezekiah heard the death sentence pronounced upon him, yet he refused to accept death as inevitable. His plea for God's mercy did not go unheeded. The Lord Jesus, perhaps, in most cases healed because He was moved with compassion. In no age has the river of God's love been completely

obstructed. Even the heathen, without covenant rights, have often by faith and earnest entreaty obtained God's special benefits through an appeal to His mercy. In no dispensation is God's ear heavy that He cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that He cannot save, provided that men's sins have not separated between them and their God. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

Sign of God's Power

Not only has God always healed out of His great mercy; He has always healed, furthermore, in order to glorify His great name and to put the stamp of divine authority upon the work of His own special servants and prophets. The healing of Naaman demonstrated the greatness of Jehovah to a heathen general. From the time of the apostles until this present day the Lord has wrought miracles of healing by the hands of apostles, evangelists and missionaries, in order to exalt the Christian gospel before the heathen and the unevangelized. From this it should be obvious that the Lord's reasons for healing the sick and afflicted have not greatly differed from age to age.

Conveyed Through Gifted Persons

If it seems to some that healing was unique in the Old Testament in that it was principally manifested in the ministries of special prophets, such as Elisha and Isaiah; let it be noted that healing in our age is most notably manifested in the ministries of those evangelists, and missionaries who have gifts of healing. God is still sovereign in the choice of those upon whom He will bestow the gifts of healing; He distributes to all severally as He will. We must not think that healing in old times was exclusively manifested in connection with the ministries of special prophets. The writings of the psalmist indicate that there was a constant bestowal of physical healing in the lives of the devout; though perhaps in a less spectacular manner. In this dispensation, the most spectacular miracles of healing follow the ministries of workers endowed with gifts of healing, but, on the other hand, healing is promised as a benefit to follow the ministries of any elders of the Church. Beyond this, any believers may pray for each other, or even claim healing directly from heaven as an act of faith, but this is not greatly more than what was available to the devout Israelite.

Answer to Prayer

That which makes God's bestowal of benefits and blessings similar in all ages is that God blesses and delivers His people in answer to prayer. The Bible, from beginning to end, is a book of answered prayer. Nothing in the religious realm is more certain than the fact that God answers prayer. Now just as long as God answers prayer, there will be physical healing. Man's first impulse in time of sickness is to call upon the Lord for deliverance, an impulse which has been common to all races of men in all ages of time. This leads to another question.

Divine Healing in the Old Testament Was Not Merely a Material Blessing

It has been remarked often that God's blessings to Israel were purely material benefits. It is true that material prosperity was promised to Israel as a recompense for godliness and obedience; however, that does not mean that material prosperity was divorced from spiritual values. Hezekiah's healing was just as much a spiritual blessing as a material one, as is evidenced by his hymn of praise composed after his deliverance. Observe the spiritual depth of his words, "*For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day*" (Isaiah 38:18-19). Obviously, Hezekiah's healing was a great spiritual blessing. His soul and spirit were as greatly benefited as was his body. Several of the psalmist's praises of Jehovah were prompted by physical healing. Certainly that which lifts the heart Godward, humbles the spirit, and purifies one's thoughts is a spiritual blessing of the first rank.

There is yet another question related to sickness and healing, the solution of which is of importance.

The Purpose of Sickness in the Old Testament

At the outset, it must be conceded that sickness was and is sometimes a visitation of judgment. The sickness and death of David's child after his great sin and the leprosy of Miriam and of Gehazi were sicknesses visited in consequence of sin. "*Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.*" It does not necessarily follow, however, that all sickness in Israel was a visitation of judgment. In the cases of Hezekiah and Job, sickness appears to be a test rather than a visitation of God's wrath. It is a natural reaction of men to assume that sickness, trouble and affliction are the judgments of God. However, the Lord in His superior wisdom finds a use for sickness other than that of punishment. The Great Refiner produces the purest of gold in human character by means of the fires of affliction. The book of Job answers once and for all the question, "*Why do the godly suffer?*" It also shows that sickness, besides being a judgment, may be a discipline, or merely a means by which God is glorified. Now if it was a fact that sickness in the Old Testament was not always a judgment, it is even more certain that sickness in our age is often a discipline rather than a punishment.

Sickness is indirectly the result of sin, but not always necessarily the direct result of sin in the individual person's life. Had there been no sin there would be no sickness nor pain. But with the fall came the curse and the fact of universal suffering. We now often suffer pain, sickness, or war without having committed a grievous sin. Inasmuch as the curse covers all nature, all are subject to its consequences, whether saints or sinners. Much sickness comes from natural causes such as disease germs, weather, food, and accident. Therefore, we do injustice to many of God's servants when we assume that all sickness and calamity are the direct result of individual sin or disobedience, although

result of sin, as a natural consequence of disobedience. This does not mean, however, that God is the author of sickness. Satan is directly the author of sickness. God permits sickness, as in the case of Job, but He does not send it. Satan cannot go farther in the infliction of sickness than God permits. God may temporarily permit the affliction of His people, but when the trial has served its purpose, God sends deliverance in the form of bodily healing. God's deliverance is sometimes delayed, but as in the case of the apostle Paul, ultimately deliverance seems to be the will of God for those who believe.

DIVINE HEALING IN THE GOSPELS

Even a casual reader of the Gospels will notice how much space is given to the healing miracles of Jesus. Healing the sick was, unquestionably, a very important phase of the mission of our Lord. The first acts of Jesus' ministry were His baptism, His temptation, His selection of the disciples, and the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately after these great initial acts, the Lord began to heal the sick. Chapters eight and nine of Matthew, which follow the record of the Sermon on the Mount, are entirely devoted to miracles of healing. Note how chapter eight begins: *"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."* The Saviour who is Saviour of the whole man, lost no time in demonstrating His power to heal as well as declaring His willingness to heal. It is hard to believe that Jesus would have spent so much time healing the sick unless He intended that divine healing should be a permanent part of the mission of the Christian Church.

One need only turn the pages of the four Gospels, giving each a passing glance, in order to appreciate what a great part of the life and ministry of Jesus was devoted to the healing of the sick. A careful reading of the four evangelists leaves an unbiased student with the inescapable impression that divine healing ought to occupy a larger place in the program of evangelism than is given it in the modern church. It is indeed gratifying, however, to observe that divine healing now is being more widely taught and practiced than it was a few decades ago. God forbid that Full Gospel churches should come to neglect this great truth just at the time when it is finding wider acceptance in the other churches.

If it were necessary to exercise some caution in applying the principles of Old Testament healing to our present situation, such is not the case with Christ's healings in the Gospels. The principles that govern divine healing today are the same as those that governed the reception of healing in our Lord's time.

There is no diminution in Christ's healing power, neither are there any changes in the conditions upon which healing is bestowed. Christ at the right hand of God is even more mighty, if possible, than He was during His earthly ministry. In fact, Christ is just as much with us

today as He was when He walked with the twelve. Mark's Gospel expresses this fact beautifully: *"So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"* (Mark 16:19-20). The Lord Himself gave us every reason to expect the same works that He performed without any change in conditions or results: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father"* (John 14:12). Jesus Christ is, indeed, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Examples of Divine Healing in the Gospels

- Leper (See Matthew 8:2-3.)
- Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13.)
- Woman with hemorrhage (Matthew 9:20-22.)
- Epileptic boy (See Mark 9:17-27.)

Jesus' Motives for Healing

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What are four motives for Jesus healing?*

We become even more certain that divine healing is permanent provision when we know why our Lord healed the sick. In fact, there are at least four reasons why Jesus healed the sick.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*How does healing afford opportunity to witness for Christ?*

1. Demonstration — Jesus healed the sick that He might attest His divinity. The Son of God must work the works of the Father. He who is from heaven must present heavenly credentials. He who is Lord must show that He is Lord over sin and sickness. Christ's healing of the sick, authority to command the elements, and power to raise the dead attested the validity of His sacrifice as the infinite Lamb of God. He who is very God can die for all men. Now the need of attesting the reality of Christianity is as great today as it has ever been. Every generation has its doubt and unbelief. Every new advance of faith requires new signs of Christ's power. Men are never greatly convinced by wonders of the past. The Lord whose power knows no limit and who is the same forever can have no reluctance to do whatever He once has done for the advancement of His cause. His signs were not unusual, temporary evidences for a single occasion; they were meant to

follow them who believe in every age as the credentials of Christianity.

2. Destruction of Satan's Work — The Lord, further, healed the sick because He came to destroy the works of the devil. Sickness is, indirectly, and sometimes directly, the work of the devil. Sickness and disease came into existence as a result of the fall. Sin and sickness are twin curses which disobedience to God and yielding to Satan brought upon the human race.

A very strong proof that Jesus was the Messiah was His successful attack upon the works of Satan. When John the Baptist inquired of the exact person of Jesus, He answered with a recital of His works, for His works were the last testimony of His person and authority. *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."* (Matthew 11:4-5).

3. Restoration — Moreover, the Lord redeemed not only our souls, but also our bodies. He who redeemed our bodies will quicken them by His power that dwells in us in response to faith in Him. Because of our lack of faith we may not see perfect health as a universal realization, but we may and do see divine healing wherever there is faith and obedience to the great commission. The Lord is able and willing to destroy in us every work of the enemy.

4. Compassion — The foregoing reasons do not, however, fully explain why Jesus healed, nor do they account fully for the continuance of divine healing as a provision of grace. Jesus, indeed, healed to manifest His power and authority in many cases, but He also healed and does heal merely because of His great compassion. If it were true that Christ needed miracles to attest His authority only at the beginning, (which is not a very logical assumption), we still could appeal to God for divine healing on the ground of His mercy and compassion.

He who said, *"If ye shall ask anything in my name"* used the word *"anything"* very carelessly unless it also included the merciful healing of diseased bodies. The compassion of Jesus was His motive for healing a leper as recorded in the first chapter of Mark. *"And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean"* (Mark 1:40, 41). The leper was instructed furthermore not to tell anyone of his healing, proving that the miracle was not intended as a sign to the public. Very often compassion, not demonstration, was the reason for Christ's healing the sick. Shall we reckon Him less compassionate today?

★NOTE to instructor

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What is necessary in order to be healed?

The Conditions for Healing

There are apparently two conditions, the fulfillment of which is necessary for the reception of healing, namely: petition and faith. It is doubtful whether Jesus ever healed anyone without being requested to do so. If we have not, it is because we ask not. If we ask, we receive; if we seek, we find. But if we ask, we must ask in faith, believing. According to one's faith, so be it unto him. Jesus worked no mighty miracles where there was no faith. Doubt and unbelief dishonor God and shut up the heavens. It has often been asked why healings do not occur in many of the large churches, if it is intended to be a permanent provision of grace.

The answer is that God does not bestow upon churches great or small what is not requested, expected, nor sought in faith. On the other hand, God does bestow upon churches great or small what they request in faith. Where divine healing is taught and preached, the Lord heals the sick, because the people seek it and believe they receive it. Where this precious doctrine is rejected, belittled, and omitted, little healing can be expected to occur, because no one seeks it and no one believes in it. God is no respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of conditions. What a revival the world could enjoy if only faith could be stimulated on a universal plane!

The Results and Spiritual Effect of Divine Healing

Many minimize the importance of divine healing, contending that healing is only a physical blessing. Such teachers pretend to see a danger in preaching the doctrine of healing, in that the bodily needs are likely to be put above one's spiritual needs. Such fail to see that bodily healing is just as much a spiritual blessing as it is a physical one. If the doctrine of healing is taught in accordance with the truth of Scripture, those who are healed are drawn closer to God. It is impossible to separate in man his physical and spiritual self. What blesses the soul has an effect upon the body and what blesses the physical man has its effect upon the soul and spirit. Man has faculties of body and spirit but he is one man. If one member suffers the whole man suffers. Those who have observed the result of divine healing through the years will witness that divine healing has moved thousands into a closer walk with God.

DIVINE HEALING IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

(Acts 4:8-10,13,14; 9:32-35; and 14:8-11)

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What assurance do we have that Jesus still heals today as He did in the days of His flesh?

Healings occur as frequently in the book of Acts as they occur in the Gospels. This fact should not surprise us when we remember that Jesus said, *"These signs shall follow them that believe; . . . they shall lay hands on the*

sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17,18). In fact, it would have been surprising to us, in view of Christ’s predictions, had we found no miracles of healing recorded among the acts of Christ’s apostles. The Redeemer who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever continues to bestow the same mercies (as the ascended Christ) that He bestowed upon men while He was the present visible Christ. The followers of the Lord do the Lord’s works, for they are commissioned as His representatives. When Jesus was present in the flesh, He dispensed His blessings directly; but now that He is ascended, His work of redemption, healing, and restoration differs only in that He works through the anointed ministries of His believers. The assumption that healing must diminish and finally cease after the departure of Jesus is a verdict of unbelief. It was never intended that Christianity should cease to become a movement of practical works of mercy and develop into a mere system of teaching about past reality. Christ is an ever-living Redeemer who never ceases to save and heal. The true gospel of Christ must ever proclaim Him as the ever-living, ever-present, ever-quickening Lord.

The study of the Acts of the Apostles is of great importance for modern believers. We have no other scriptural pattern for our Christian service. If the Church today cannot follow the practice of the early Church, then we cannot know certainly how we ought to serve and work. There certainly is nothing in the Sacred Record to indicate that the mission and the effectiveness of the Church should ever in any age differ from that of the early Church. Perhaps the influence of the Church would be greater today, if we gave more attention to the study of the book of Acts.

The book which we call the “Acts of the Apostles” should actually be called “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” That which took place in the book of Acts in connection with the ministries of the apostles was the manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit. The healings and powerful works were granted by God, not because the disciples were special or superhuman ministers, not merely because they were apostles, but because such is the normal operation of the Holy Spirit whenever He is present in power. The Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons nor times; whenever and wherever men

exercise full faith in the name of Jesus, the Spirit will make effective the work of Christ as savior, healer, baptizer, and provider.

Andrew Murray wrote, “Whenever the Spirit acts with power, there He works divine healings. Would it not seem that if ever miracles were superfluous, it was at Pentecost, for then the word of the apostles worked mightily, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was abundant? Well it is precisely because the Spirit acted powerfully that His working must needs be visible in the body. If divine healing is seen so rarely in our day, we can attribute it to no other cause than that the Spirit does not act with power. The unbelief of worldlings and want of zeal among believers stop His workings. The healings which God is giving here and there are the precursory signs of all the spiritual graces which are promised to us, and it is only the Holy Spirit who reveals the almightiness of the name of Jesus to operate such healings. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, let us place ourselves unreservedly under His direction and let us seek to be firm in our faith in the name of Jesus, whether for preaching salvation or for the work of healing.” — *Divine Healing*, page 26.

Our study of healing in the ministries of the early Christians is made with the object of making clear the fact that divine healing was not only a way of revealing the divine authority of Jesus as the Son of God, but that it was also a permanent provision of God’s grace toward the needy believer. Divine healing did not diminish on the death and ascension of Jesus, nor did healing cease with the death of the last apostle. The assumption that divine healing was a special manifestation of the Spirit for the apostolic age is false on several counts. Healing is a permanent blessing of the Great Physician. Furthermore, the idea of an apostolic age is unbiblical, for the time between the day of Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ is one single dispensation. The Holy Spirit, bestowed upon the day of Pentecost, is to abide with us forever. Where is there biblical support for the notion that the Holy Spirit would become gradually more dormant? We propose to show in lesson eight that divine healing has accompanied all full manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s power in all ages, even to the present.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: If in a class setting, turn to the person sitting next to you and explain to them, in your own words, the meaning of divine healing, why you believe divine healing is for today, and what conditions are necessary for receiving divine healing.

After both of you have had an opportunity to share, put what you have learned about divine healing into action! Agree together in prayer for any physical needs you or someone you know may have.

If you are working alone on this lesson, take time to ask the Lord to direct you to someone this week who would benefit from the things you have learned about divine healing in this lesson. Make it a point to share with that person and ask them if they would like for you to agree in prayer with them for the healing of their physical need. On the back of the worksheet at the end of this lesson, please write about your experience.

DIVINE HEALING

Part 1

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. How do we know that God does not change? _____

2. Where do we find the beginning of all New Testament doctrine? _____

3. How is divine healing in the Old Testament similar to that in the New Testament? _____

4. What are four motives for Jesus healing? _____

5. How does healing afford opportunity to witness for Christ? _____

6. What is necessary in order to be healed? _____

7. What assurance do we have that Jesus still heals today as He did in the days of His flesh? _____

DIVINE HEALING

Part 2

AIM & KEY VERSES: Same as for Lesson 7, as this is a continuation of that teaching.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Complete the following puzzle by answering the questions listed below:

- 1) D_____
- 2) _I_____
- 3) V_____
- 4) _____I__
- 5) _N_____
- 6) ___E_____
- 7) H_____
- 8) _E_____
- 9) A_____
- 10) L_____
- 11) __I__
- 12) N_____
- 13) G_____

1. The young woman in Acts 16:18 was healed of _____ (2 words).
2. The best proof of the reality of divine healing is the _____ of those who have been healed.
3. Paul is healed of a _____ bite in Acts 28:5.
4. We would perhaps be blessed with a great manifestation of healing in our churches if we were motivated more by _____ for the suffering than by a desire to see supernatural work. (See example of this motivation in Matthew 8:5-7.)
5. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, _____ him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).
6. As a result of the healing of the _____ (2 words) in Acts 3, Peter's preaching brought five thousand souls to Christ.
7. God added 15 years to this man's life when he was "sick unto death." See Isaiah 38:1-5, 21.
8. Healings were not restricted to the apostles, but are the result of the Spirit's operation in any faithful _____.
9. Divine healing is an _____ to believing prayer.
10. Jesus healed the _____ in Matthew 8:2,3.
11. The woman healed of a hemorrhage in Matthew 9:20-22 was healed because of her _____.
12. This man was healed of leprosy by dipping in the Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5:1-14).

13. The healing of the lame man at the _____ (2 words) was the first healing miracle after Christ's ascension. (See Acts 3:1-11)

*Answers to Opening Activity: 1. Demon Possession; 2. Witness; 3. Viper; 4. Compassion; 5. Anointing; 6. Lame Man; 7. Hezekiah; 8. Believer; 9. Answer; 10. Leper; 11. Faith; 12. Naaman; 13. Gate Beautiful

HEALING THROUGH THE AGES

From the day of Pentecost on, divine healing has been a normal manifestation of the working presence of God's Spirit. Whenever there have been few or no healings, the reason for their scarcity has been, not the reluctance of God to heal, nor the difference in the time, but rather the lack of faith accompanied by worldliness and self-sufficiency in the professing Church. The stream of salvation and healing has been flowing constantly from Calvary to the present hour, though sometimes the Church has lived far away from its healing waters. Let us trace the healing stream through the ages.

Healing Miracles in the Early Church (Apostolic Healing)

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★List at least 10 of the miracles that are recorded in the Book of Acts and where they are found.

- The lame man at the Gate Beautiful healed through Peter. (See Acts 3)
- Multitudes of sick people healed even as the shadow of Peter passed over them. (See Acts 5:15)
- The healing of Aeneas through Peter. (See Acts 9:34)
- The healing of Dorcas through Peter. (See Acts 9:40)
- A cripple at Lystra is healed through Paul. (See Acts 14:10)
- Young woman with a spirit of sorcery is healed through Paul at Philippi. (See Acts 16:18)
- Special miracles of healing are wrought through Paul at Ephesus. (See Acts 19:11,12)
- Eutychus is restored to life through Paul at Troas. (See Acts 20:10)
- Paul is healed of the viper's bite on the famous island of Melita (Malta). (See Acts 28:5)
- The father of Publius healed at Melita through Paul. (See Acts 28:8)
- Many persons are healed on the same island of Melita. (See Acts 28:9)
- Miracles of healing are wrought through Philip at Samaria. (See Acts 8:6,7)

Healing in the Church After Bible Times (Post-Apostolic Healings)

We have ample proof that healing continued in the Church after the death of the apostles. The following are some testimonies of those who witness to the continuance of healing miracles:

Justin Martyr (Second Century) — "For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men. Though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists and those who used incantations and drugs."

Irenaeus (Second Century) — "Wherefore also those who are in truth, the disciples receiving grace from Him do in His name perform miracles so as to promote the welfare of others, according to the gift which each has received from him . . . Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole."

Tertullian (Third Century) — "For the clerk of one of them who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit was set free from his affliction, as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. And how many men of rank, to say nothing of the common people have been delivered from devils and healed of diseases."

Dr. Marshall, translator of St. Cyprian, says of the fourth century: "There are successive evidences of them (healings) down to the age of Constantine. (After Constantine the Church became completely worldly and the dark ages began.)"

Modern Healing

Twelfth Century

In the twelfth century the Waldenses, a movement founded by Peter Waldo, restored the truth of divine healing. The following is from their articles of faith: "Therefore, concerning this anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith, and profess sincerely from the heart that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed with the anointing oil by one who joins them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body." (Quote is from the book "Ministry of Healing" by A.J. Gordon.)

Eighteenth Century

In the eighteenth century the Moravians or United Brethren kept the torch of healing aloft. Zinzendorf, their leader, said: "To believe against hope is the root of the gift of miracles; and I owe this testimony to our beloved Church, that apostolic powers are there manifested. We have had undeniable proofs thereof . . . in the healing of maladies in themselves incurable, such as cancers, consumptions, when the patient was in the agonies of death, all by means of prayer, or of a single word." (Quote is from the book "Ministry of Healing" by A.J.

Gordon.)

We could quote Wesley, Luther and a host of others in whose ministries the sick were healed, but these testimonies suffice to show that healings will always accompany the exercise of faith when the Holy Spirit is honored, whether in one age or another.

DIVINE HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT

If there were no specific promises of bodily healing to be found in Scripture, we could hold reasonable hope of healing through appeal to the mercy of God as it is revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus. However, there are specific promises in the Word in which the Lord offers to give anything the believer may ask in His name. Now, we may add, such a promise to do whatever we may ask in the name of Jesus would be sufficient ground for seeking bodily healing even if physical healing were not actually mentioned. Surely, "anything" includes physical benefits as well as spiritual blessings. Nevertheless, in the fifth chapter of James, the inspired writer declares that "*the prayer of faith shall save the sick.*" Beyond these assurances we have a conditional covenant promise that if the believer abides in Christ and His Word abides in him, he may ask "whatsoever he will," which certainly includes healing of the body. If we are abiding in Christ and His Word is abiding in our hearts, we may ask for whatever benefit, whether physical or spiritual, with the assurance that a covenant-keeping Lord will fulfill His promise as surely as He is God.

To summarize, let us note that one may rest his hope of healing in the mercy of God, in His promise to do anything, in a specific offer of bodily healing, or in the terms of a covenant, all of which constitute a solid foundation for a doctrine of Christ as the Great Physician; but perhaps the strongest promise for our doctrine of healing is that bodily healing is provided for in the vicarious atonement of Christ. There is healing in the finished work of the cross.

Isaiah's Prophecy

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Yet it pleased the Lord to make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:3-6,10).

Of One Familiar With Sickness (vs. 3)

Here the prophet sees a picture of Christ upon the cross, a picture of Him so afflicted with the afflictions of

mankind that men turn their faces away in horror. The Christ of the cross was lowly esteemed by selfish men, even despised, but the redeemed now look back upon that scene and view One who, to them, is the fairest among ten thousand, the fairest because His sufferings mean the healing of the nations.

It is impossible for us to imagine the full extent of our Lord's suffering. We know that at the whipping post He was beaten with the Roman scourge until His back was one solid bruise; we know that He was compelled to carry His cross upon that bruised back; we know that He was nailed to the cross and crowned with a crown of thorns. We know that He was left until He died suspended by His nail pierced hands and feet. All this we know, but how much He suffered mentally and inwardly as a result of sin, injustice and rejection we can never know. We can be sure from the words of Isaiah that He became acquainted in His ordeal at Golgotha with every kind and degree of sickness and suffering possible to the human body.

It is not our purpose merely to describe the shameful suffering inflicted upon Jesus, but rather to point out that He, to whom we go in prayer, is completely familiar with all our pains, sickness, anguish, oppression and crushing. When Christ is moved with compassion toward us frail beings, it is with a compassion derived from having experienced, Himself, all that we experience. Is it not a great privilege to go to one in prayer who has purposely visited our sphere and made Himself familiar by experience with every manner of suffering? Every believer should be able to go boldly to the throne of grace in every time of sorrow or sickness. Of this we may be certain, that Jesus has a special love and compassion for those who suffer, and that He, in answer to believing prayer, either will heal the sick one completely, or draw so near in His comforting sweetness that the pain and suffering will be mostly borne by Him.

The King James version reads, "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*" But the sorrows and grief include physical sickness, a fact which is made more clear in the translation of Dr. Young, the author of Young's Analytical Concordance, which reads, "*He is despised and left of men, a man of pains and acquainted with sickness.*" Rotherham in his Emphasized Bible renders the clause as follows: "*Man of pains and familiar with sickness.*" Whatever may be our plight, we cannot lift a petition to heaven with which our Lord is not familiar. He is "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities,*" because He suffers with us in all our anguish.

Of One Bearing Our Diseases (vs. 4)

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★How did Jesus bear our sicknesses?

Not only are we told that Jesus suffered every form of suffering, but furthermore, that He actually, in bearing

the physical suffering occasioned by the ordeal of the cross, was bearing vicariously all our sufferings. Those were not His pains He bore, but ours. When we say that Jesus suffered vicariously, we mean that He was taking sufferings that belonged to us, and bearing them in such a way as to make our bearing them unnecessary. Just as Jesus bore our sins so as to lift them from us, so in like manner did He bear our sickness so as to lift sickness from us. Just as He died that we might not die, so also He was made sick that we might not be sick.

Some may ask why godly people do get sick if Jesus bore our sickness. We do not pretend to know fully the secret of suffering, but we do know that healing and divine health are conditional blessings just as forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life are conditional blessings. In order to be saved one must meet the conditions of salvation which are faith in and surrender to the Lord. Many apparent professing believers are such only in appearance, having not complied fully with the conditions. Likewise, in order to receive healing one must meet the conditions of faith and consecration of the body to the service and glory of God. There are also some cases of sickness, such as that of Job's, in which the Lord permits a temporary trial of sickness in order to make one more patient with others who suffer, to bring out a maturity of character not otherwise possible, or to use one's healing for His glory. We must not question the wisdom of divine providence in our trials, but we may continue to seek healing on the grounds that Christ purchased healing for us on the cross.

Of One Scourged for the Diseased (vs. 5,6,10)

There is no mistaking the fact that verse five teaches the vicarious atonement for sin; that is, that Christ suffered for our sins upon the cross making it possible for God to forgive us our sins and to impute to us Christ's perfect righteousness. When punishment was inflicted upon Jesus on the cross, it was our punishment. Christ was our substitute taking our place and receiving what we justly deserved to receive. Vicarious suffering is the suffering one person bears for another. We are saved because our Saviour took our condemnation.

Now this verse, just as unmistakably as it teaches vicarious atonement for sins, teaches vicarious suffering for our sicknesses.

"By His stripes we are healed." Young's version reads, *"By His bruise there is healing for us."* The Lord's death purchased life for us, His bruise inflicted at the whipping-post purchased healing for us. The whipping-post and the cross are distinct experiences; likewise forgiveness of sins and bodily healing are distinct blessings. The stream that flows from the cross is a cleansing stream and a healing stream. The lifeline that is thrown to dying humanity is woven of the two strands of salvation and physical healing. There is no reason why we should not present this two-fold truth in such a way that sinners might grasp both promises at once and receive both benefits at once. Many are both saved and healed at the same altar, but cases where such occurs should be more frequent. We do not preach the Foursquare message unless we present Christ both as Saviour and

Healer, as well as Baptizer and King.

When we like sheep went astray we brought upon ourselves eternal condemnation and physical woes. Disobedience brought both death and disease. All sickness is the direct or indirect result of sin. In order to lift the curse of sin, God laid upon His beloved Son the sins of man. The curse would not be wholly lifted, however, without a provision for the healing of sickness. When Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, He destroyed sin, sickness and death. Verse 10 says, *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief."* Rotherham translates as follows: *"Yet Jehovah purposed to bruse Him, He laid on Him sickness."* Yes, God put our sickness as well as our sins upon Jesus; let us take by faith health as well as forgiveness.

Christ's Fulfillment

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What New Testament passage proves that Isaiah 53 refers to the work of Christ?

"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:16,17).

Healing the Sick

In these verses the healing of the sick by Jesus is declared by the evangelist to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4. There can be no doubt whatever that the prophecy in Isaiah refers to the two-fold vicarious work of Christ. These verses leave no doubt that healing the sick was definitely a part of the mission of Christ. Jesus healed not only to show His divine power, but chiefly because He came to set men free from the work of the devil.

There has been much opposition to the teaching of vicarious healing. Many who quote Isaiah 53 to substantiate the doctrine of a vicarious atonement for sin reject the idea that it includes bodily healing. They say that the word "healed" refers to the healing of the soul, a cure from sin, not from bodily sickness. It might be pointed out in the first place that the word translated "healed" comes from the same Hebrew root as the word "physician," and is used frequently of physical sickness. Let us, however, note here how Delitzsch, a famous German Hebrew scholar comments on Isaiah 53.

Now, as Delitzsch points out, Christ's healing of the sick is declared by an inspired apostle to be a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4. The only question which might arise is: "In what sense was the prophecy fulfilled?" Did Matthew mean that the healing of the multitude in that one case

completely fulfilled the prophecy, or that the healing described was an evidence that the prophecy had begun to be fulfilled and would continue to be fulfilled every time a believer claimed for himself the virtue made available by the finished atoning work of Jesus? The latter explanation is unquestionably the correct one.

Now the use of the words "took" and "bare" indicate that the sicknesses were healed because they were put upon Christ and were borne away in the same sense that sins and iniquities were *taken* and *borne*; therefore, the fulfillment would of necessity be continual, just as it would be in respect to the forgiveness of sins. In addition, healing did not stop with the eighth chapter of Matthew, but Jesus and His disciples continued to appropriate the healing stream all through the New Testament. The great part of the ministry of Jesus and that of the apostles which was devoted to bodily healing demonstrated clearly the fact that bodily healing was a permanent provision of the Christian gospel made eternally available by the work of the cross.

Defeating Satan's Work

Jesus taught us to pray in the following manner regarding testing and temptation: "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*" (Matthew 6:13 — Literal translation). Obviously God's highest good for us is to be delivered from the evil one. The Lord does indeed permit trials and testings to teach us what we do not learn through the Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but His best for us is a life of victory in which we are not led through woes and temptation. If, however, we must suffer trials, pain, and sickness (which things are the work of the evil one), God wills that we be delivered from them as soon as they have served their purpose. In either case God's will for us is deliverance.

Now we are entitled to deliverance because it is purchased for us by the atoning work of our Redeemer. He came to destroy the works of the devil, the principal of which are sin and sickness. "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8). That work of Christ which wrought the destruction of Satan's work was His suffering and death upon the cross. The atoning work of Christ delivers the body from disease just as it delivers the soul from sin. Paul clearly teaches the redemption of the body when he writes, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and 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*" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). Yes, he teaches that our spirits and our bodies belong to God by the right of purchase. We cannot think that God's highest good for any believer is disease any more than we can believe that His highest good for our souls is sin. One surely ought to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one." The apostle in his letter to the Romans (Romans 8:11) further declares that the quickening work of the Holy Spirit not only effects a regeneration of the spiritual soul but also a quickening of the mortal body. "*But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from*

the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." We are indeed mistaken if we suppose that the work of Christ is solely for the soul, leaving the body to the ravages of Satan.

Peter's Message

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. . . by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"(1 Peter 2:23-25).

We have yet another witness to healing in the atonement. Peter in his first Epistle quotes Isaiah 53, putting the word "healed," however, in past tense. "*By whose stripes ye were healed.*" The work is past in time because when Peter wrote, Calvary's victory was already an accomplished provision. Our sins have already been borne away so that we have no condemnation. Likewise our sicknesses have been carried so that we need not now in present time suffer them. Both Weymouth and Rotherham translate Peter's clause, "*by whose stripes ye have been healed.*" In reality we have already been redeemed of sin and sickness by the Lord's substitutionary atonement.

That Peter refers to physical healing is reasonably clear from the fact that he uses the Greek word *IAOMAI* for "healed" from which the word "physician" (*IATROS*) comes. Both Isaiah and Peter use words for "healed" that unmistakably refer to physical healing.

THE NEW TESTAMENT HEALING COVENANT

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:13-18).

This passage of Scripture is, perhaps, the most important of all passages with regard to the continued practice of divine healing in the Church. Here is a specific command that the sick should appeal to the elders (pastors) of the Church when they are sick, requesting prayer for their healing. Now, as has already been pointed out in a previous lesson, we would not necessarily need specific promise of bodily healing in order to be justified in seeking it. The promise to do "anything" the believer asks in Jesus' name surely includes bodily healing. However, it is indeed doubly assuring to have a specific command and promise of

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Does James 5:14,15 constitute a healing ordinance or covenant? Explain.

Now we contend, furthermore, that James 5:14 constitutes the institution of an ordinance of divine healing to be practiced by the Church with the same faithfulness that baptism and the Lord's supper are practiced. Regarding the Lord's supper, Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." Throughout the book of Acts the apostles were faithful in carrying out this command and the Church has continued to carry out the command, although there is only one specific Scripture passage which gives a description of the rite (1 Corinthians 11:23,24).

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize in water, a command which was carried out by the apostolic Church, and which continues to be practiced by nearly every branch of the Church in some form, although there are only a few passages in the epistles where the rite is mentioned. The point is that any command or prophecy of Christ concerning the practice of the Church may become an ordinance of the Church even where there is but a single description of the ordinance in the epistles. Keeping this thought in mind, we recall that Jesus said, in Mark 16, in the great commission, "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Now this prophecy of Jesus should be sufficient for us to expect a practice in the Church of laying hands on the sick for their recovery, but in order that we may be certain that the ordinance is to be a continual one in the Church, the Lord inspires James to interpret the great commission to us by way of making prayer for the sick a perpetual ordinance. In James 5, we have the establishment of a perpetual ordinance just as surely as we have in 1 Corinthians 11 the establishment of an ordinance of the Lord's supper, or as surely as we have in Acts 2:38, the institution of an ordinance of baptism.

Of this passage, Andrew Murray says, "This text above all others, is that which most clearly declares to the sick what they have to do in order to be healed. Sickness and its consequences abound in the world. What joy, then, for the believer to learn from the Word of God the way of healing for the sick! The Bible teaches us that it is the will of God to see His children in good health. The apostle James has no hesitation in saying that 'the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' May the Lord teach us to hearken and to receive with simplicity what His Word tells Us!" (Divine Healing, p.108).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Is there a difference between affliction and sickness?

Verse 13 — Here a distinction is made between affliction and sickness. Dr. Young translates verse 13 as follows, "Does anyone suffer evil among you? Let him pray." Affliction in this case does not mean sickness but the many kinds of suffering, mishap, and misfortune to which all mankind is subject. There cannot be perfect felicity in a world full of suffering, poverty, pain, and unhappiness. God has not promised the believer perfect freedom from suffering, nor is it always God's will that we escape all suffering and trial. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings . . . (1 Peter 4:12,13). James himself says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2,3). Did not most of the early Christians suffer trials and persecutions above those of the unbelievers? There is, indeed, for the Christian a certain fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Paul writes, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;" (Philippians 1:29). A reading of 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 will give one an idea of the afflictions of Paul, but we do not gather that he is complaining; rather we learn that he glories in his afflictions. "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" (2 Corinthians 11:30).

Now regarding our afflictions, we are commanded to pray, but we are not specifically told that God will remove them. Prayer often brings a kind of help better than deliverance. No one enjoys suffering and persecution, but which one of us has not looked back upon a severe trial, seeing in it the hand of God. Some of our best lessons we have learned in trial, and some of our finest traits of character were developed in testings. The best answer to prayer is sometimes, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is not inferred here that we are not to ask for deliverance; we have the right, indeed, to ask God to deliver from any kind of trouble; but, on the other hand, if God tenderly answers, "My grace is sufficient," then let us turn our prayer into praise and blessed communion, being grateful for the grace of God which is so sweet it makes us forget our anguish. Of one thing we are certain, prayer either brings deliverance or sufficient grace to make a trial a stepping stone to higher Christian character.

We note further that the merry are commanded to sing psalms. God never subjects the whole Church to severe trial at the same time; there are always some who are merry, whose responsibility it is to sing songs of encouragement for those who suffer. The greatest achievement in life is not that of being happy, but rather that of making others happy. How much greater would the influence of the Church be if there were fewer complaining and criticizing Christians and more merry, psalm-singing Christians! When the afflicted have prayed and communed with the Lord; when they have seen the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, perhaps they will forget their woes and join the merry singers of psalms.

Verses 14,15 — Sickness is something different from normal affliction. It is caused by germs, or organic failure, a condition which no one would call normal. Sickness, which seldom serves to benefit one spiritually, is not God's will for us, not at least as a permanent condition. The sick are to call for the elders of the church who are authorized and capacitated to pray for their healing. The elders, of course, are the pastors or leaders of the church. The benefit obtained in the case of sickness is direct divine healing. We are specifically told that the Lord will answer the prayer of the elders by raising up the sick person. Andrew Murray said, "The Lord Jesus spoke of suffering as being necessary, as being willed and blest of God; while He says of sickness that it ought to be cured." Troubles, trials, persecutions, and accidents come upon us from without, from the world which is not yet redeemed from the curse, but sickness is in the body which the Lord redeemed when He redeemed the soul. Sickness therefore is to be healed, for our sickness was borne by Christ upon the cross.

Note that it is the prayer of faith that saves the sick. Faith is the condition for healing, just as it is for forgiveness of sin. The sick person exercises faith when he calls for the elders of the church. The elder prays the prayer of faith for which he is capacitated by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What does the oil typify?

Note, further, that it is the Lord, in response to faith, who raises up the sick person through the power of the Holy Spirit. The oil with which the sick person is anointed serves to call attention to the fact that the healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. The anointing with oil should never be omitted when prayer is made in public, or when there is any chance of a sick person's attributing the healing to the person of the elder. The elders are the same as any believer, except for their calling; it is the Holy Spirit that the oil symbolizes, who quickens the body. There is no virtue in the oil itself except to typify the work of the Spirit. We should neither attach superstitious faith in the oil, nor in the elder for his calling, and use the oil in obedience to the command, but give God the glory for the work of healing, placing all our faith in Him.

If we have already been prayed for by several consecrated elders without obtaining healing, we make a mistake to seek after every evangelist far and near who has a ministry of healing; for our quest may well be in vain. What we need to do is give ourselves in prayer, fasting, and Bible study to building up our faith. We must not look to persons more than to the Lord.

It will be observed also, that sin may have caused the sickness directly or indirectly although we are not

always to assume that a sick person has committed some great sin. The passage says, "If he have committed sins." If it is a fact that the sick one has sinned, he may receive both forgiveness and healing in the one act of faith in Christ, for Christ's work purchased both forgiveness and healing.

Verses 16-18 — Not all sickness need, however, be prayed for by the elder. When one's faith is weak, he should by all means call for the pastor and be anointed, but if his faith is strong, or if the elder is not at the time available, he may pray together with other believers. Often the confession of faults is a very good thing; certainly when the Holy Spirit moves the church to a confession service. The fervent prayer of any believer is more powerful and effectual than he often knows. Even with our faults, our prayers avail much when they are energized by the Spirit. Elijah, a man of like passions, who was subject to periods of great discouragement and dark doubt, opened and closed the heavens by prayer. Let us not doubt that God will heal no matter how much the enemy may hold our faults before us. Let us confess our faults and pray one for the other. God is able.

Objections Against the Validity of James 5:14,15

The great promise of God to the unbeliever is that contained in John 3:16. The greatest promise to the believer is that of the fullness of the Spirit, contained in such passages as Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:38, 39. Unquestionably the greatest promise of physical blessing recorded in the Word is found in James 5:14,15. It is certainly to be regretted that the Church has for so long a time neglected to claim this precious promise. It is, indeed, an amazing fact that many church leaders and many commentators on the Scriptures go far out of the way to invalidate this promise of healing. The opponents of healing have brought forth some very strange explanations of James 5:14,15, in order to explain it away. Now there should be no doubt whatever, in the mind of the honest interpreter, of the perpetual application of this promise of healing. Yet some prominent writers, guided by prevailing prejudice, have attempted to establish that the book of James was written to Jewish Christians and that it has no application to the church as a whole. Anyone can see the danger of such a practice in Bible exegesis. After a while there would be no book of the New Testament for modern Christians.

Objection One

The book of James was written to the twelve tribes scattered abroad and it cannot apply to Christians in general.

Answer

There are several reasons why this objection is unfounded. First, while it is true that James greets the twelve tribes scattered abroad, yet he is writing to Christian Jews who were real members of the Christian Church. He addressed his Epistle to the Jewish-Christians because he had a special calling to minister to the Jewish Christians. Paul wrote to the Gentile

Christians because he was called as an apostle to the Gentiles, but it would be exceedingly foolish to argue that a modern Jew could not claim a promise of salvation found in Romans on the grounds that the book of Romans was written to Gentiles.

Furthermore, James addresses his readers using the word "brethren," a common greeting among early Christians. In verse one of the second chapter he says, "*My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*" That they were Christian brethren is obvious from the fact that their faith was placed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now among Christian brethren whose mutual faith is in Christ Jesus, there is indeed no respect of persons in regard to His precious promises. If He has healing in answer to the prayer of faith, for Jewish Christians, He has the same for Gentile Christians, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. To make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament is in violation of the very spirit of New Testament Christianity. (See Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Acts 10:34.)

Moreover, James was writing to Church members. They are to call for the elders of the Church. James wrote not in Hebrew, but in Greek, and he uses the word, "ekklesia" to designate the Church, the same word used by Paul and the other New Testament writers to designate the body of Christian believers. The word "ekklesia" comes from two words "ek" meaning "out of" and "kaleo" which means "to call." The Church is composed of all of the redeemed who are called out of the world and washed in the blood of Jesus. Beyond a doubt the recipients of James' letter were Church saints no matter what their nationality was.

We have even further proof that James wrote to Christian believers who were in the body of Christ, in that he admonishes them to look for the coming of Christ. "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . . Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*" (James 5:7,8).

It should be pointed out, in conclusion, that divine healing was a common practice in the Church as is made clear by Paul's reference to gifts of healing in the first book of Corinthians. Our evidence for the ordinance of healing is not found only in the book of James, although the promise in James 5:14,15 would be sufficient to establish our hope of a healing ordinance. Must we doubt the validity of the promises of God's holy and inspired Word unless they occur a number of times?

Objection Two

The oil used for anointing in Bible times was applied because it had medicinal value. Therefore, James recommends the use of medicine to cure the sick.

Answer

This is an absurd objection, though it is put forth by a prominent writer and is often re-echoed. Surely they do

not mean to tell us that an inspired apostle, writing under the guidance of an all-wise God, would prescribe a massage in olive oil as a universal cure-all. What good would an outward application of oil do for a person afflicted with tuberculosis or diabetes? No, the oil had only symbolic value. The text clearly says that the prayer of faith saves the sick, not a dose of medicine; the Lord, not the physician, raises up the sick.

Now we do not disparage the truly scientific work of sincere men of medical science. Christians must favor every agency for the alleviation of human suffering. Conscientious doctors are a tremendous blessing to the world, indispensable to modern society. One, no matter what his faith in divine healing may be, should never condemn doctors as a whole nor should one harshly condemn believers, of weak faith, who seek the help of medical science. However, we ought not to confuse natural healing with direct divine healing through prayer offered by pastors who have gifts of healing. No matter how efficient medical science becomes, there will always be the responsibility laid upon the Church to heal the sick.

Objection Three

That no mention is made of physical healing in this passage, but only of salvation of the soul.

Answer

It is true that it says "save the sick" and that the word "save" is the same used of bodily healing very frequently. When Jesus said to the woman in Mark 5:25-34, "*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*" He used the same word for "*made thee whole*" as James uses for "*save the sick.*" Of course the whole matter does not rest upon the word "save" for James further says, "*the Lord shall raise him up.*" In this latter clause there is no doubt that he refers to physical healing. In verse 16, he suggests another means of healing, which is that of praying one for another. There is no possible way of explaining out of this text its reference to bodily healing through the direct power of the Lord.

We quote here again from Dr. A. J. Gordon, a godly man outside the Full Gospel ranks who has written on divine healing. "Here is the calling for the elders of the church — a voluntary appeal to the ministry and intercession of the servants of God. Oil is applied as a symbol of the communication of the Spirit, by whose power healing is effected. It does not seem reasonable to suppose that it is used for its medicinal properties. Because, observe, it is the elders of the church, not the doctors (of medicine), who are called to apply it; and it is accompanied by prayer, not by manipulations and medications. As in baptism the disciple confesses his faith in the cleansing power of Christ's atonement, *by the use of water*; or, as in communion he declares his dependence on Christ for spiritual sustenance, *by the use of bread*; so here he avows his faith in the saving health of the Spirit *by the use of oil*. In other words, this whole ceremony is a kind of sacramental profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the divine Physician acting through the Holy Ghost." (*Ministry of Healing* — Page 31).

Sincere commentators cannot but see in James 5:14,15, the establishment of an ordinance of divine healing. I trust we are not too unkind when we suggest that many find it easier to invent complicated explanations to get rid of the healing message than to exercise healing faith to pray for the sick. Not everyone, of course, has the gift of faith, nor gifts of healing, but we cannot deny the fact that many today do not possess these gifts. If one cannot pray the prayer of faith, he should at least direct the sick to elders who are capacitated to pray effectually.

We quote again Dr. A. J. Gordon. "We believe that there are those in our times who have humbly sought, and manifestly obtained this gift of prevailing faith. If the larger majority of Christians, either through wrong teaching or indifference have willingly consented to surrender this primitive birthright of the church, and have learned to say without emotion to the sick that lie at their doors, thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous, there is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up; there are some who are more jealous for the Lord's honor in this matter. Because they believe that the miraculous gifts are for all ages, they have thought it not covetous to seek them for them-

selves — and yet not for themselves, but that through them the Lord might still show forth His glory."

As long as God answers prayers; as long as His promises are true; as long as we may ask anything in Jesus' name, just so long will the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avail much. Perhaps not all may have gifts of healing, but all by close communion with God in prayerful study of the Word may have the energized faith that lays hold of God's good provision in behalf of the needy. Any righteous man energized by the Holy Spirit can pray effectually so that his prayer avails. Dr. Young translates James 5:16 as follows: "Very strong is a working supplication of a righteous man."

A strictly literal rendering would be, "Mightily prevails an energized petition of a righteous man." Perhaps some have hesitated to pray for the sick feeling that their righteousness was not equal to that of the elders of old time. One is righteous who is wholly trusting in the righteousness of Christ and walking in full obedience to His known will. This is the prayer of a righteous man, not a perfect man. Even Elijah was not a perfect man when he shut up the heavens by prayer, but a man of like passions as we are. Nothing hinders our obeying the Word of God in praying the prayer of faith for the sick.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Read again Isaiah 53:3-6,10 (Isaiah's prophecy); Matthew 8:16,17 (Christ's fulfillment); and 1 Peter 2:23-25 (Peter's message). Ask the class members to write a paragraph expressing their thoughts on the role of divine healing in the atonement.

Have they learned anything new about divine healing in the last two lessons? If so, ask them to take a few minutes to jot down in a few sentences what they have learned.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

DIVINE HEALING Part 2

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. List at least 10 of the miracles that are recorded in the book of Acts and where they are found. _____

2. How did Jesus bear our sicknesses? _____

3. What New Testament passage proves that Isaiah 53 refers to the work of Christ? _____

4. Does James 5:14,15 constitute a healing ordinance or covenant? Explain. _____

5. Is there a difference between affliction and sickness? _____

6. What does the oil typify? _____

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

AIM: To gain a full understanding of the Second Coming of Christ as set forth in the Foursquare Declaration of Faith: "We believe that the Second Coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from Heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and that so shall they be with the Lord; that also seeing that a thousand years is as a day with the Lord, and that no man knoweth the hour of His appearance, which we believe to be near at hand, each day should be lived as though He were expected to appear at even yet that in obedience to His explicit command, "*Occupy till I come,*" the work of spreading the Gospel, the sending forth of missionaries, and the general duties for the upbuilding of the church should be carried on as diligently, and thoroughly, as though neither ours nor the next generation should live in the flesh to that glorious day" (Aimee Semple McPherson).

KEY VERSES: *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:2,3).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

See also 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9, 15-23 and 2 Peter 3:10-14, 17, 18.

OPENING ACTIVITY: "The Second Coming of Christ" — What thoughts fill your mind when you hear those words? If you are in a class setting, turn to the person sitting next to you and share briefly what comes to your mind. If you are working alone, write your thoughts on the back of the worksheet at the end of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

The Second Coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the Church. It has been called "The Very Pole Star of the Church." Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, the chief sacrament of the Church, we do so in remembrance of Christ and His finished work of redemption until He comes. Every communion service is, in itself, an illustrated sermon on the Second Coming as well as on the first coming. According to Paul the early believers were "*looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ.*"

We have unmistakable evidence that the Christian Church held the blessed hope of Christ's imminent coming for several centuries, in fact, until the time of Constantine, when the same apostasy that caused the eclipse of the blessed truths of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and of divine healing, caused also the eclipse of the truth of the literal coming of Christ. With the spiritual awakening after the reformation came renewed expectancy of the blessed appearing of our Lord. Today one who spiritualizes the Second Advent is hardly considered fundamental in his belief.

There are some who find it difficult to believe in a literal return of Christ, but let them remember, that it was difficult for the Jews to believe in the first advent. The greatest theologians of Jesus' day rejected Him as the promised Savior, yet sacred history reveals that Jesus was the promised Redeemer set forth by the prophets,

who literally fulfilled the prophecies. It is quite certain that many theologians will be found wrong at the Second Advent, deceived by their so-called "reason."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Why is it reasonable to believe in a literal Second Coming?

That Jesus will come again in person in visible form should not seem to us strange nor improbable. When Jesus came to earth on the occasion of His First Advent, He literally fulfilled the score of prophecies concerning Him recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. The prophecies of Christ's First Advent could not have been fulfilled more literally. Now, if the prophecies concerning the First Coming had a literal fulfillment, why should not the prophecies concerning His Second Coming in both the Old and New Testaments have an equally literal fulfillment? How can we reproach the Jews for scoffing at a literal advent and rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, if we spiritualize the Second Coming of Jesus? Yet there are thousands of Christians today who have been taught that the Second Advent of Jesus will be fulfilled only in some figurative sense.

We believe that Jesus will come again in just as real and

literal manner as He came the first time. No other interpretation of the Second Advent is consistent with the teaching of Scripture. We believe that Christ's coming is imminent — i.e. that He may come at any time — and that His imminent approach is the glorious hope of the Church and the only solution to the world's problems.

We have often been reproached for making a major doctrine out of Christ's Second Coming; but this emphasis of the doctrine is not inconsistent with the place given to the Second Advent in the New Testament. One verse in every twenty-five pertains to the Lord's coming. There are, in fact, more references in the New Testament that refer to Christ's coming than to personal salvation.

Now, if we accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, there is no possible way we can reject the truth of the literal, personal, visible, Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus announced His own coming (John 14:2); the angels announced His return (Acts 1:11); and the apostles constantly preached His coming as a literal, personal coming (1Thessalonians 4:13-18).

FACTS CONCERNING CHRIST'S COMING

The Fact of Christ's Coming

Promised by Jesus Himself

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3). (See also Matthew 24:3-25, 46.)

Jesus, Himself, was just as clear in His teaching of a personal return as He was in His teachings on any other subject. From the fact that the apostles and New Testament writers announced the coming of Christ, we safely take it that they were instructed by the Lord Himself. If the disciples had understood Jesus' references to His return as referring to salvation, the outpouring of the Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem, or to death, surely they would have so taught in their epistles; yet Paul, Peter and John seem always to refer to a literal, personal return of the Lord rather than to any figurative "coming."

Promised by Angels

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10,11).

Not only do we have the personal promise of Jesus of His Second Coming, but here we have the announcement of angelic heralds, that the ascending Jesus will come again. Note that the very departure of

the Lord is marked by a heavenly assurance of His return.

Note further, that He who is coming in the clouds to receive the redeemed into heaven is the same Jesus of Nazareth who lived, died and rose again. Moreover, He is coming again in exactly the same manner as that of His ascension. Now how did He depart? His departure was personal and visible. His disciples were gazing at Him as He ascended heavenward. They were not in a trance nor an ecstasy, but fully conscious and in normal command of their faculties of sense. This is an important fact, for many say that the Second Coming refers to death or conversion. When we die Jesus does not come to us in visible form, but we go to Him in invisible form. The same holds true of salvation in which there is no visible return of Christ. The message of the angels makes possible only one interpretation of the Second Advent; that is, that of His personal, bodily, visible return.

Promised by Holy Apostles

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, affirms that his description of the personal appearance of Jesus was received by a word from the Lord. He plainly claims divine inspiration as the source of his information. *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord."* The literal translation of Charles Williams, accepted as unusually accurate by the majority of fundamental scholars, renders 1 Thessalonians 4:15 as follows: "For on the Lord's own authority we mean to say that those of us who may be left behind and still living, when the Lord comes back, will have no advantage at all over those who have fallen asleep, etc." Paul was not surmising; he was speaking by divine authority.

The Manner of Christ's Coming

Observe Negatively That . . .

- The coming of Jesus cannot be spiritualized to mean the death of the believer. When one dies, the Lord does not come to him, but he goes to be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23,24). Furthermore, the dead in Christ are not raised up every time a believer dies, nor does the Lord descend from heaven with a shout.
- The coming of Jesus cannot be made figuratively to refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This is

evident from the continued references to the Second Coming occurring in the epistles written long after the day of Pentecost. There is a sense, indeed, in which the descent of the Spirit was a "coming" of the Lord, but not the coming mentioned 318 times in the New Testament, which is a literal coming. At Pentecost the same Lord did not come in the visible manner in which they had seen Him go away, nor were the dead raised.

- The Second Coming cannot be said to be fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus, in A.D. 70. It is true that some things that happened during the destruction of Jerusalem resembled conditions which will prevail during the Great Tribulation, but the destruction of Jerusalem cannot by any means be construed as a coming of Christ. Moreover, John, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, still speaks of the coming of Christ as future. In A.D. 70 there was no resurrection of the righteous dead nor any rapture of the living saints.

- While Christ in a sense comes into the believer's life at conversion, this experience cannot be construed as being the actual Second Coming promised by Jesus and the angels, for the same reasons set forth above. Believers who have already been regenerated are admonished by Paul to "*look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*" (Philippians 3:20,21).

Observe Positively That. . .

- The coming of Jesus is a personal return. He who died and rose again is going to return in person to complete the redemption of the saints by calling them forth from the dead, catching up the living saints, and ushering all the redeemed into the banquet room of heaven. The same Jesus of Nazareth who ascended from the mount in the view of His disciples will return in like manner. We are careful to emphasize this fact because the modern church is tending to reject the idea of a personal return of Christ. William Newton Clarke says in his "Outline of Christian Theology," "No visible return of Christ to the earth is to be expected, but rather the long and steady advance of His spiritual Kingdom; if our Lord will but complete the spiritual coming that He has begun, there will be no need of a visible advent to make perfect His glory on the earth" (P. 444).

Of course it makes no difference what any theologian may think about God's plan; our only valid source of knowledge is the Word of God. Throughout the Bible the coming of Jesus is represented as an act in which the Lord will catch up and reward His saints, and in which He will bring judgment upon unbelievers. Furthermore, the Lord's coming, according to Scripture, is preceded by apostasy and tribulation, not by a long steady advance toward the perfect realization of a kingdom of righteousness on earth. The reign of peace and righteousness will be possible only when Jesus comes again to put down tyranny and set up His own Kingdom. Considering the matter from a practical standpoint, history does not show that the Church is bringing the

world to the service of Christ, but rather that the Church now, as always, has been a minority witness for Christ, preparing a people for the Lord. The believers will always be lights shining in a dark world until the Sun of Righteousness arises.

- The Lord's coming will be a physical one. That is, it will be a real return as indicated by Acts 1:11.

- The Lord's coming will be a visible coming. "*Every eye shall see him.*" Neither the rapture nor the coming to reign will be secret. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim that Jesus came in 1941, but invisibly. If men say, "Lo! He is here or there," we are to believe them not, because He will come before the eyes of all with a shout. (See Matthew 24:26,27; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.) Secret comings and invisible comings are ruses to deceive the unwary.

Finally, the coming of the Lord will be a glorious, triumphant coming. The Lord came the first time in condescension and humiliation, but He will come again in glory and exaltation. In his first advent, He was the Lamb of God; at His Second Advent He will be the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (See John 1:29; Revelation 5:5.) When Jesus came the first time, He was crucified under the sovereignty of the Roman Empire; when He comes again He will reign, Himself, whose right it is to reign. The triumphant coming of Christ will complete the dispensation of the Church and usher in the eternal reign of the King of Kings. The final triumph of the Lord in His glorious appearing is also the glorious triumph of every believer.

THE IMMINENCE OF CHRIST'S COMING

We believe in the imminence of Christ's coming for His Church. We do not look for any definite fulfillment of prophecy that must precede the rapture of the saints. There are several prophetic events which must precede the day of Christ, the day of His revelation in flaming fire taking vengeance upon the disobedient, but His coming to take His bride into the marriage supper is absolutely the next event on the prophetic calendar.

It is our belief that a period of seven years called "The Tribulation" intervenes between the rapture of the Church and the coming of Christ with His saints to reign. The tribulation is also called "*Jacob's trouble*," and "*the seventieth week*" in the terms of Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks. Christ, in the 24th chapter of Matthew and the 21st chapter of Luke, as well as Paul and John, makes it clear that a period of tribulation precedes the final stage of the Second Coming.

We do not believe, however, that the Church will go through the tribulation for the following reasons:

1. The tribulation is a Jewish period called "*Jacob's Trouble*"; there is no particular reason why the Church should be on earth during it.

2. The tribulation is a time of judgment upon the earth. There is no point in the Lord's subjecting His own bride, His body on earth to this judgment.

3. We are admonished of the Lord to pray that we may be counted worthy to escape the tribulation.

4. The saints are represented as being in heaven and as partaking of the marriage supper of the Lamb before the final return of Christ with His saints. (See Revelation 19.) In order for the Lord to come with His saints, He must first come for them.

5. If the saints are to go through the tribulation, there could be no looking for His appearing until after the appearance of Antichrist. The Lord's coming would not be imminent and the Church would be looking for the appearance of Antichrist more than for the coming of Christ. If the saints had to go through the tribulation before Christ could come, what significance could there be in such verses as I John 3:2,3. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.*"

TWO STAGES TO CHRIST'S COMING

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What are some of the events that will occur at Christ's coming?*

Upon the first examination, a comparison of Scripture passages referring to the Lord's coming may suggest several contradictions. Some verses represent Christ as coming for His saints while others represent Him as coming with His saints. Some passages refer to the return of Christ as the time of the rapture and reward of the Church, while others refer to it as the time of judgment of and vengeance upon the ungodly. Sometimes we are told that we are to look constantly for the coming of the Lord as if it could occur at any moment while at other times we are told that the "Day of the Lord" cannot come until some other things happen beforehand. There are passages which suggest the taking away of the redeemed at the beginning of tribulation in order that they may escape it; yet there are also passages which place the Lord's coming at the close of the Great Tribulation. How can all the seemingly contradictory facts be reconciled?

There is a fairly obvious explanation which quite satisfactorily clears up this seeming contradiction. It is that Christ's Second Coming consists of two stages. There are two distinct aspects of the Second Advent. The Lord will come at the beginning of the tribulation for His saints who will be changed and raptured along with the righteous dead who have been resurrected. Being raptured, the saints will escape the tribulation, a time of suffering for the Jews, called Jacob's Trouble, at which time the Man of Sin will hold sway upon the earth, at

which same time the saints will be rewarded in heaven for their faithful labors. At the close of the tribulation the Lord will come all the way to the earth, accompanied by the saints, defeating the Man of Sin (Antichrist) and his evil hosts and establishing His kingdom of righteousness in which the saints will rule with Him.

This double aspect explanation permits all the facts relative to Christ's coming to fit together into a clear picture of the events of the last days. It is the theory most prevalent today among fundamental students of prophecy.

THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S COMING

★NOTE to instructor

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*How do we reconcile the apparent differences in the descriptions of the Lord's coming?*

At the Rapture

The Resurrection of the Dead

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

This passage, like 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 obviously refers to the first aspect of the Lord's coming, at which time the living saints will be transformed into their immortal state and the dead in Christ will be raised up incorruptible. This cannot refer to the final stage of the Lord's coming, for at that time He rides out of heaven followed by His saints. The blessed hope of the living saints is not that of the Lord's appearing in judgment and vengeance, but His appearing to transform and rapture His own.

The Transformation of Our Physical Bodies

The living saints will be changed into an immortal and incorruptible state suited to their celestial existence. (See 1 Corinthians 15:51; Philippians 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2.) The incessant yearning of every believer is for that moment when, at the Lord's appearing, he will be changed into the likeness of his Lord. "*And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"* (Romans 8:23). There are two aspects to the redemption of our bodies. The work of Christ upon the cross purchased our redemption, including the redemption of our bodies so that by faith we may appropriate His righteousness and healing for our bodies. The Lord has bought us, and we belong to Him, but He must leave us in this world of evil as witnesses until the time of His return in glory. When He comes He

will fully redeem us by giving us glorified bodies no longer subject to mortality. Some argue that only our souls are now redeemed, and that the redemption of the body is not until the Lord comes. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 6:19,20, we believe that our bodies as well as our souls were redeemed at the cross entitling us to divine healing. (See Romans 8:11.) However, our complete bodily redemption awaits the coming of Christ when our bodies will become immortal.

The Rapture of the Saints

The believers will be caught up to meet the Lord, and will return with Him to His judgment seat where rewards will be given, and the marriage supper will be celebrated. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.) In the account of the rapture, which Paul claims to have received by a word from the Lord, nothing is said about the Lord's coming all the way to the earth. He comes only to the clouds where the Church meets Him. This is His coming for His Church, not His coming to reign on earth with His saints. Unless we keep these two comings separate, we will little understand prophetic teaching.

The Reward of the Saints

The saints will be rewarded with many crowns including the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4). One of the reasons why the Lord is coming for His saints before He comes with them is that He may reward them with their crowns in preparation for their ruling and reigning with Him. It is between the rapture and the revelation that the judgment of the believer in respect to his rewards takes place. (See 2 Corinthians 5:10.)

At the Revelation

The raptured saints will return to earth with Christ to reign. This is at the close of the tribulation and at the beginning of the Millennium. (See Revelation 19: 1-16.)

The Revelation of Christ's Glory

Christ will appear in glory as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He who in His first advent was the humble Lamb of God will return as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. The only hope for an ideal society on this earth is that of a kingdom of Christ governed in righteousness, equity and truth. All human efforts to set up a truly just society have failed. All efforts to bring peace have utterly failed and will continue to fail until He rules who alone is just. The woes of this present age are the result of the basic selfishness of mankind. When Satan is bound, who is the author of selfishness, and Christ reigns, who is God's perfect incarnation of love, then right will prevail and peace will abound.

The Punishment of the Disobedient

The ungodly and disobedient will be destroyed in flaming fire. (See 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Psalm 2:9.) If Christ is to set up a righteous kingdom upon the earth, He must necessarily change or eliminate those who will inhabit His kingdom. There seems to be no remedy in earth or heaven for stubborn unbelief. Many who now stubbornly resist the loving offer of the gospel will be

found still unresponsive and disobedient at the day of His coming. There is no evidence whatever that a second chance after death would be accepted by those who now refuse their opportunities of salvation. God cannot create men free moral agents without the chance that they will choose sin and reject salvation; yet those who choose God and righteousness will be to His eternal glory and delight.

The Destruction of Antichrist

Christ will, in His coming as a thief in the night, overtake many unprepared and sleeping (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9). At the rapture, the Lord does not come as a thief in the night, for the saints are not sleeping nor are they children of night. Worldly, self-centered, pleasure-seeking unbelievers, however, will be so madly bent upon the vain quest of their selfish goals that the day of Christ will overtake them suddenly and unexpectedly. They will be saying "peace and safety," but sudden destruction will come upon them. When Christ comes in His wrath the saints will not be here; they are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation at the rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

The Destruction of the Beast's Followers

The beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. During the tribulation the Antichrist will appear to be all-powerful and invincible, but that will last only for a short time. He who defeated Satan by His work of redemption on the cross will ultimately defeat the whole Satanic trinity. Antichrist will be no match for the Christ of God. Satan incarnate will be utterly defeated by God incarnate. The King of heaven will take captive the king of hell. God's glorious cause is the winning cause. Love and justice will ultimately triumph over selfishness and wrong. Let those who choose to follow Antichrist know that theirs is a doomed cause. We who may suffer in a selfish world for Christ's sake may be assured that our patient waiting and laboring is worthwhile in light of Christ's final triumph. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Those who take the mark of the beast, or who follow the false prophet, or who serve in the beast's armies will be slain by the sword of the King of Kings. The surest hope is that of the blood-washed believer who is looking for the coming of his Lord, who will be taken up in the rapture to meet the Lord. Those who are left behind at His coming to go through the tribulation, may possibly save themselves by refusing to identify themselves with Antichrist or to take his mark, but they in all likelihood will be martyred. Those who do take the beast's mark (see Revelation 13:15-18) become the enemies of the Lord. Their end is destruction. (See Revelation 19:21.)

The Judgment of the Nations

Christ will judge the nations (Matthew 25:31,32). There will be, evidently, some nations that will give no official recognition to Antichrist, who will be judged worthy to keep their identity during the millennium. This is not an individual judgment, but that of nations only. (See

The Conversion of Israel

Israel, as a nation, will turn to the Lord. (See Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 25:9; Jeremiah 23:5,6; Romans 11:26.) When the Lord comes in His glory to defend Jerusalem and to reign as King of Kings, then Israel will turn to the Lord and recognize Him as the Messiah. It is sad that Israel must be subject to so much suffering, tribulation, and shame before recognizing Him whom they should have recognized twenty centuries ago. Jesus saw the desolation of Israel and Jerusalem, and the ultimate salvation of Israel at His coming, before He went to the cross. (See Matthew 23:36-39.) When the awful trials of the Great Tribulation have been endured, then will Israel look upon Him whom they have pierced and say, "*Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*"

The Removal of the Curse

The curse will be removed from the earth (see Romans 8:19-21; Isaiah 32:15; 35:1 55:13; 65:25;). In order to make perfect His reign of righteousness upon the earth and to assure the complete happiness of His subjects, the Lord will remove the effects of the curse from all nature, and God's creation will be seen in its true beauty.

READINESS

★NOTE to instructor

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★Do you consider the rapture imminent? Why or why not?

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And

the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9, 15-23).

There are many very interesting aspects of this great subject of the Second Coming of Christ. First of all it is an interesting fact that Jesus is coming again. The hope of the return of Christ keeps the Church joyful and working. It prevents our becoming discouraged in times when the forces of evil seem to prevail over the forces of righteousness. The fact of our Lord's return was very interesting to New Testament writers for they refer to the Second Advent more often than to the majority of doctrinal truths.

The manner of Christ's coming is also a very interesting disclosure. It is thrilling to think of His coming as a triumphant event in two stages, by which He rescues His people and appears in all the royal majesty of heaven to fill the whole earth with the glory of His kingdom. It is good to know that the crucified Lamb of God will become the King of Kings; that the rejected sufferer seen by Isaiah will yet appear as the triumphant Messiah seen by Daniel and Zechariah.

It is of exceeding interest to read of the signs that are to announce the Lord's approach and to look for those signs as they become increasingly clear in the shaping of world events.

Furthermore, we are interested in the plan of God and in His manner of dealing again with His people, the Jews, who have wandered homeless for so many centuries. We will not be thought too curious if we seek to know what will happen on earth between the rapture and the revelation, when sin is being headed up in a single satanic being, who, though overwhelmingly powerful and successful for a season, will be destroyed by the glory of the returning Lord.

However, nothing can be of greater interest to true believers than the revelation of that kind of life and conduct that will make us ready and keep us ready for the hour of His coming. It is of great practical importance for those who await the return of the Bridegroom to know how to array themselves in the wedding garments, and how to go out to meet Him. In almost every part of the Bible where the Second Coming is mentioned there are also warnings to be ready and instruction relative to that which constitutes readiness. The discourse of Jesus concerning His return, recorded in Matthew 24 and 25, is full of warnings and admonitions about readiness.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "*Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man*"? Certainly He infers that many will not be able to escape the tribulation. Obviously, conditions will be such at the time of the Lord's coming that those who do not watch and pray will be in danger of not escaping. Now the latter clause of this verse (Luke 21:36) "*And to stand before the Son of man,*" apparently points to the same event described by

Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which we call the rapture. How else could one escape what is coming upon the earth at the time of the great crisis except by being caught up in the rapture?

Now if being reckoned worthy to go up in the rapture is conditional upon our constant watchfulness and prayer, then it is not unconditionally assured beforehand. Our Christian profession must be maintained by continual fellowship with God and by the constant exercise of our faith in the redemptive work of the cross. He who believes in Christ with his whole heart keeps on believing. Salvation, in its fullest meaning, is not the result of one act of surrender; it is the state of a life surrendered and kept surrendered. The Lord is coming for a people who are and will be surrendered at the moment of His appearing. We see no warrant whatever for the teaching that they who are once saved (or believing) will always be saved. It is certainly not to be assumed that everyone who now is reckoned a believer or who thinks himself a believer will be ready for the Lord's coming. Why is the Word so full of warnings of failure, written to believers, if failure is not possible? Throughout the entire body of prophetic Scripture there is the ever-present urgency to watchfulness, and the plain inference that failure to be vigilant and consecrated to Christ will constitute one as unready to stand before the Son of Man.

We are not saying that salvation is by the works of the law, nor are we suggesting that failure is inevitable. We believe that salvation is by faith and that He is able to keep us from failure, but we also believe that faith is a life, not a single act and that He keeps only those who trust in and appropriate His keeping power. We daily avail ourselves of the grace of God; we do not presume upon His grace. We believe that faith is faithfulness, not presumption. They will be constituted worthy at His coming who are faithful at His coming.

The Man Who Is Ready — 1 Thessalonians 5

His Character — Verses 4, 5, 6

The unbeliever lives and walks in darkness. He is engulfed always in the blackness of spiritual night. The blessed hope of the believer is always like a midnight visit of the thief to the unbeliever. On the other hand, the "brethren," that is, those who are sons of God, look not upon the Lord's return as a thief's intrusion, for they are not living in the night. The Lord's appearance to the believer will not be less sudden than his appearance to the world, but the believer will be ready and waiting, while the unbeliever will be sleeping and unprepared.

Now, it must not be overlooked that Paul is here warning believers of the possibility of their slipping back into the carelessness of self-indulgence, and finally into the sleep of apostasy. We are not of the night but of the day, therefore, let us walk as children of light. If we cease to be watchful, and, through self-indulgence, lose our love of His coming, then night will creep over us and claim us as children of darkness. There is no need of our falling asleep, for there is One who can keep us; but a relapse

into the darkness of sin is a possibility, as is shown from the fact of the constant warnings to believers with which the Word of God is filled. We are children of the day, so let us continue to be watchful and ready as is becoming of those who love His appearing.

His Armour — Verse 8

Here is an admonition for the believer to clothe himself in God's armour; to put on the wedding garment in preparation for the Bridegroom. The believer's best defense is that of faith, love, and hope. They are a breastplate and a helmet protecting him against worldliness, selfishness and despair. The enemy's attempt to relax our vigilance will be made through attacks upon our faith in God, our love for souls, or our hope of the Lord's coming. Let us not have faith, love, and hope as vague ideals, but let us put them on as our armour so that they become an integral part of us.

His Appointment — Verse 9

The Lord's coming will be in wrath upon the sinful world, but in blessing upon the believing Church. When we believed, God appointed us to salvation. While we continue to believe, that appointment stands. Unbelievers, through persistence in sin, bring upon themselves an appointment to judgment. These acts of God are not arbitrary, but conditioned upon the attitude of the believer. We determine what God's appointment for us will be.

His Duty

- To Edify — Verse 11
- To Warn — verse 14
- To Support the Weak — Verse 14

His Attitude

Rejoicing (verse 16) — The Christian way is a way of rejoicing, a happy way. Perhaps more reverence and seriousness are needed, but not at the sacrifice of joy. Let us not mistake lightness and superficiality for Christian joy, however. Our aim is a deadly serious one, but our hearts are filled with the joy of the Lord which is our strength. In Christ we may rejoice evermore even in trial and persecution.

Prayerful (verse 17) — Prayer has a very important relationship to Christ's coming. Our Lord Himself admonished His disciples saying, "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*" As the day of the Lord approaches, prayer becomes increasingly essential to the overcoming life.

Thankful (verse 18) — The great sin of the Israelites in their wilderness journey was their murmuring. It was perhaps the cause of their ultimate defeat. An attitude of thanksgiving marks a truly devoted Christian. Seldom do the grateful fail in an hour of trial.

His Hope to Be Blameless at Christ's Coming
Verse 23

Two things are clearly inferred by this verse: first, that sanctification is a progressive work of God through the Spirit, with entire cleansing as the goal; and second, that it is the aim of the Christian life to continue blameless in the entire man unto the coming of the Lord. It is the Lord who keeps us, and He is able to do so perfectly, but we have the responsibility to yield to God's working and to cooperate with the guiding Spirit. It is the Lord who sanctifies, but it is our duty to present ourselves to Him for cleansing.

EFFECTS OF THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S COMING

God's revelation to us of the events of the last days and of the Second Coming of Christ was not given to us merely to satisfy our curiosity about divine mysteries.

The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is one of the most practical of all the Christian doctrines. Every New Testament writer appealed to the imminence of the Lord's coming as an incentive to more diligent and patient Christian living. Even the early Church was looking for Christ's return as spiritual believers have looked for the blessed appearing during all the centuries. There is no doubt that the knowledge of the exact time of the Second Advent has been withheld from the Church for the very reason that constant expectation of the Lord's appearing exercises a salutary influence upon the believer. The Lord has been wise in not divulging the date of His return. If we knew that He could not come for a long time, we would be tempted to be careless about extending His kingdom. On the other hand, our awareness of the possibility of an immediate rapture keeps us working lest the night should come upon the world in which no man can work.

So important is the consciousness of the imminence of the Lord's return that we are reminded of it on every occasion of the observance of the Lord's supper. Observe the words of Paul which we repeat in every communion service: "*For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*" Just as the Jew in the celebration of the Passover sets an empty chair at the table with the hope that, before another year's celebration, the Messiah will have come, so the Christian in his partaking of the bread and the wine of the communion (symbols of the absent Lord) looks forward to His return and His visible presence. The regular observance of the Lord's supper not only reminds us of what Christ has done; it also reminds us of our responsibilities while we wait for His soon return.

The words of Jesus in Mark 13:32-37, must continue to be applicable to every age as long as He tarries.

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his

servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:32-37).

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What are some of Paul's brief admonitions to the Thessalonians in regard to readiness?

In the New Testament there are between 30 and 40 different kinds of Christian duty and Christian virtue that are declared to be urgent in view of the coming of the Lord. The following sets forth a few of the many practical results in the believer's life of his looking for the Second Advent.

It Promotes Watchfulness

Believing in the imminence of Christ's coming, we must look for Him to come at any moment. We must not sleep, for He might come at midnight. We must not become absorbingly occupied with selfish interests nor with self-indulgence, for His coming might take us unawares. Some have objected to this point of view, calling it negative. They say that our incentives ought to be positive rather than those based upon fear. We answer that both positive and negative appeals are made to men by God throughout all the Bible. Awards for faithfulness and punishment for disobedience are inserted side by side in the terms of every transaction between the Lord and His people. It is true that there are some persons sufficiently mature as to need no warnings of penalty in order to do their best work, but there are also many who have not yet reached that point of maturity who will not apply themselves to the fullest extent possible without special incentives and perhaps warnings. Certainly no type of society has yet been organized on earth in which incentives to effort and warnings against transgression could be eliminated. Perhaps God knows us better than we know ourselves. At any rate He has promised special benefits to those who are found faithful at his coming, and has voiced warnings of punishment to those who are disobedient.

It Promotes Sobriety

The apostle Peter wrote, "*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*" And again, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 4:7; 5:8). Paul expresses the same admonition: "*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober*" (1 Thessalonians 5:6). Christian sobriety is taking a serious view of life; it is not sadness nor gloom. The Christian is both serious and happy; both sober and cheerful. But the Christian's cheerfulness does not run to frivolity nor questionable foolishness. Man is both a

creature of sensation and a creature of thought; he has enough sense of humor to escape being crushed by the weight of responsibility. Some, however, in order to escape responsibility prefer to live in a world of sensation and hilarity, dulling their consciences with carnal indulgence. God is not at all opposed to our having some harmless diversion nor to our seeing the humorous aspect of some situations, but He is displeased when we fail to take our responsibilities seriously or fail to see the gravity of our situation in a world full of suffering and tragedy. The latter days will be so marked by crisis and the death struggle between the causes of Christ and Antichrist that they ought to be days of deep seriousness for all who understand what is happening and what are the issues at stake. Our expectation of Christ's soon return should move us to deep seriousness.

It Promotes Faithful Labor

Jesus uses the practical appeal in the fact of His imminent return to urge His disciples on to diligent service when He tells them the parable of the talents. *"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord"* (Matthew 25:19-21). He who uses his God-given capacities for Christian service will be rewarded according to the proportion of his faithfulness. He who does nothing with his capacity to bless others and to extend God's kingdom will have his capacity taken from him and he will, moreover, lose his reward. There will be great opportunities for creative service in Christ's coming kingdom, but the opportunities will be given those who have served faithfully here or who are found faithful at His coming.

It Promotes Prosperity of the Soul

This idea was forcefully expressed by Jesus when He said, *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works"* (Matthew 16:26,27). If man's existence were confined to this world only, he would, of course, be wise in seeking to gain as much as possible of this world's goods, but such is not the case. This life is the testing ground for a future life, which, for the faithful will begin at the coming of Christ. In view of our eternal destiny, we must conclude that there are things more important than this world's values. When Christ comes the possession of saving faith will be of infinitely more value than the combined riches of this world.

It Promotes a Clean Life

The doctrine of Christ's coming is an incentive for the mortification of fleshly lusts. Paul uses the fact of the

Lord's coming in order to impress the Colossians with the need to live a clean life. *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Colossians 3:4,5). The apostle John expresses the same idea when he writes, *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"* (1 John 3:3). The Christian turns from all uncleanness of life because he serves One who, because of His purity, is called the Lily of the Valley. Only by being pure will we be unashamed before Him at His coming. Purity is His very nature and they shall be pure who share with Him His kingdom.

It Promotes Obedience to the Word

When the apostle Paul desired to impress upon the young man Timothy the need of living in strict accordance with the commandments of God's inspired Word, he based his appeal upon the imminence of Christ's appearing.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus — That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:12).

Jesus said, *"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."* Obedience to Christ is the test of our loyalty to Him. Disobedience to God's Word marks one as self-willed, as one who resists the will of the Lord for his life. Such disloyalty is the very spirit of the Antichrist and characteristic of those who will march in his armies. One is a true believer because he has surrendered his will to Christ and because his delight is to do the will of God. If the believer is in any way tempted to be careless in his attitude toward divine commandment, he overcomes the temptation as soon as he thinks of the nearness of Christ's coming.

It Promotes Brotherly Love

The new commandment of our Lord is that we should love one another. Perhaps nothing displeases the Lord as much as the failure of professing Christians to obey this the greatest of all commandments. By the same token, nothing so pleases the Lord as seeing the brethren dwelling together in unity. The rapture is once spoken of as *"Our gathering together unto Him."* There is good reason to believe that those who cause division will fail to be ready in the day that the brethren are caught up together to meet Him in the clouds. We who expect to be caught up together, must, indeed, *dwelt together* in love while we await the day. Perhaps if we are often reminded that our Lord expects to find us walking in love when He returns, it will serve to restrain strife and divisions in the Church. Was not this the aim of Paul when he wrote the following to the Thessalonians: *"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do*

toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13).

It Promotes Caution In Judgment

We are too prone to judge one another hastily, when, in fact judgment does not belong to us at all. Each of us stands or falls only before the judgment seat of Christ. He will accept no man's verdict regarding our lives. But, whatever we are shall be made known in the hour of His coming. If anyone is displeased with the work of his brother, let him be cautious lest he judge him unfairly. If the brother is deserving of reproof, he will receive it when his Lord comes; but if he is blameless, he may stand better before his Lord than the hasty accuser. We can all well afford to leave judgment in the hands of the Great Judge, because all things will very soon be revealed. We do well to heed the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:4-5, and we shall if we are sincerely looking for the Lord to come. *"For I know nothing by myself; yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."*

It Promotes Patience In Trials

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*How is the doctrine of Christ's coming a blessing to us in trials?*

We can bear almost any trial if we know that our Deliverer is close at hand, and especially so if we are assured that there is a special reward reserved for the patient, which will be awarded by our Lord at His coming. During all the times of severe trial for the Church, from apostolic times to the present, the Second

Coming has been a favorite doctrine. Moreover, no other message has served to comfort the Church in periods of testing and persecution as has the message of the Second Advent. Without a doubt we are now entering into a time of great trial; the signs of the last days are rapidly multiplying. We ought to be fortifying our hearts for the day of trial by the study of the prophetic Word by which we assure ourselves of the certainty of Christ's soon appearing. Perhaps never have we needed so much the light of the blessed hope to shine in our hearts in all its brightness. Even the Isle of Patmos was quite bearable to the beloved apostle John after he had seen the apocalyptic vision of the Lord's final triumph. In the hour of our trial we will be wise to study John's Revelation in the opening chapter of which John himself wrote, *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand"* (Revelation 1:3).

It Promotes Bold Witness for Christ

NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What manner of persons ought we to be who know the final fate of the world?*

We are fully aware of the urgency of personal witnessing for Christ. It is not always easy to speak in the Lord's behalf in a perverse society where so many think it smart to scoff at the things of God, but we do nevertheless witness for Christ, for we want to be pleasing to Him in the hour of His coming, which hour no one of us knows. If we are ashamed of Him before men, we cannot but be ashamed before Him in that day. When we are tempted to shrink from testifying we call to mind the very words of Jesus recorded in Mark 8:38: *"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

CLOSING ACTIVITY: The verses listed below are to be written on a chalk board and read together. After they are read, the student should write out those verses that are new, or have helped them gain a better understanding of the Second Coming of Christ. Then they are to jot down a brief explanation of the Scripture as it relates to the Second Coming. Student's should be encouraged to memorize several of these verses.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

Read: John 14:2,3; Acts 1:10,11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52; Luke 2:28,36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8; 2:1-3,6,7; Jude 14; Revelation 19:11,14; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9, 15-23; 1 Peter 1:7,13; 4:13; Hebrews 10:36-38; 1 John 2:28; 3:2,3; 2 Peter 3:10,14,17,18.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *Why is it reasonable to believe in a literal Second Coming?* _____

2. *What are some of the events that will occur at Christ's coming?* _____

3. *How do we reconcile the apparent differences in the descriptions of the Lord's coming?* _____

4. *Do you consider the rapture imminent? Why or why not?* _____

5. *What are some of Paul's brief admonitions to the Thessalonians in regard to readiness?* _____

6. *How is the doctrine of Christ's coming a blessing to us in trials?* _____

7. *What manner of persons ought we to be who know the final fate of the world?* _____

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING

AIM: Our Lord certainly did not mean for us to be in doubt about the signs of His coming. Long prophetic discourses of Christ are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the new details added by each indicate that the original discourse was longer than any of the accounts we have in the Gospels. Each writer recorded the details which to him seemed most significant. Altogether the evangelists have given us a vivid picture of the last days as portrayed by Christ Himself. In this lesson we will take a look at these prophetic discourses and other Scriptures which refer to the signs of the Lord's Coming.

KEY VERSES:

See Matthew 24:3-14, 37-39; Luke 21:24-36; and 2 Timothy 3:1-5,7.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Everyone should have a newspaper. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5,7 and Matthew 24:4-7. Instruct class members to take a current newspaper and find at least three articles that are depictive of the perilous times mentioned in 2 Timothy 3 and Matthew 24. Circle the article and next to it write which characteristics of end times it depicts. Discuss the discoveries.

If you are working alone, cut out the articles and paste them on a piece of paper. Next to each article write which characteristic of end times it depicts. This will be turned in with your Individual Worksheet at the end of the lesson.

INTRODUCTION

We need to carefully lay several foundation stones prophetic facts before approaching the study of the signs of Christ's coming. First of all, we believe that Christ's coming is imminent, that is that the Lord could come at any time. There are no unmistakable signs that must be fulfilled before the rapture of the Church — the first stage of the Second Advent. Moreover, we believe that no man knows nor can know the exact time of the coming of Christ. The signs of His coming are not such as to point out the day and hour of its occurrence. Now, while we cannot know the exact time of the rapture, we certainly can know the times and seasons (Matthew 24:32-34; 1 Thessalonians 5:1). When we see the fig tree (Israel) put forth its leaves we know that the summer is nigh. When we see the accumulation of all the trends and movements that will end in the great tribulation, we can know that the last days have arrived.

Most of the signs will reach their full manifestation during the tribulation period, after the rapture, but "coming events cast their shadows before." Before the Great Tribulation, there will be shadows of tribulation. Before the night of great sorrow for the earth, there will be a twilight period called the "beginning of sorrows." The saints will not go through the Great Tribulation, but they will be tried by a preliminary time of tribulation, during the final days when the forces that will cause the Great Tribulation are converging. We are to look always for the coming of Christ, but if we are discerning of the times, we shall be able to sense the increasing nearness of the glorious day. We do not know just when the Lord will come, but as we look around us today, we find every indication that we ought to look up and lift up our heads. It is not at all unlikely that our redemption draweth nigh.

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 24:3-14

Many Bible commentators have interpreted the events prophesied in Matthew 24 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year of A.D. 70. It is quite probable that these prophecies have a double reference. In fact, they answer two distinct questions asked by the disciples, which were: "*When shall these things be?*" and "*What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?*" When the disciples asked "*When shall these things be?*" they had reference to the destruction of the temple mentioned by Jesus when He said, "*There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*" (Matthew 24:2). Now some of the things pointed out by the Lord would most likely be in answer to their first question about the destruction of the temple.

The Lord did not point out which things would happen within a few decades and which things would happen in the very last days, and the reason why answers to the two questions were blended together was that there would be a double fulfillment. Many conditions prevailing at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70) will also prevail again in the end time. Inasmuch as the nation of Israel with Jerusalem as the capital is to be restored (a prophetic development now being realized), there is no reason why that which happened in A.D. 70 cannot happen again with a more complete fulfillment of Christ's prophecy.

Verse 3 — "*And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*"

Here His disciples ask of the Lord the question that all prophetic students are asking over and over again, "*What shall be the sign of Thy coming?*" Their question

provided the opportunity for our Lord to reveal, not only for the benefit of the disciples, but for all believers in all ages, the signs that will indicate the time of the end. The verses that follow must be interpreted in the light of the question asked by the disciples. They must refer to conditions to prevail in the last days at the time of the Second Advent, because they are in answer to a specific request for information regarding end time.

Now, the "end of the world" referred to here is not the destruction of the physical earth, but rather the end of the age; literally, "the consummation of the age." It refers to the time of the Lord's coming when He will bring to an end or consummation the age of grace and usher in the age of His kingdom. The coming of the Lord and the "end of the world" are, then, the same thing, the coming of the Lord brings the consummation of the age. Dr. G. R. Berry's Interlinear Greek Testament translates verse three as follows: "What is the sign of thy coming and of the completion of the age?" The signs given by Jesus in answer to the disciples' question will indicate that both the coming of Jesus and the completion of the age are at hand.

Verses 4 and 5 — "And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Of what is Jesus concerned in Matthew 24:4?

Jesus is eager that His disciples be watchful and alert, but He is equally concerned that they be not deceived by false Christs and false prophets. We are to labor always as if the Lord were coming at any time, but we are not to be diverted by any false claims of the re-appearance of Christ, nor are we to be deceived by any false prophets who would have us cease to preach the gospel of grace. There will be no change in this age or dispensation of the gospel until the Lord appears visibly in His glory. There is one large organization of false prophets operating today, selling their books from house to house, whose teaching is that Christ has already come and that the age of grace is already past. This sect has only a negative gospel of hatred and criticism of all the churches still preaching the message of salvation and grace. The enemy is making a desperate effort in these times to deceive men into ceasing to preach Christ. We are not to be deceived by these or any other false prophets. When the Lord comes, He will reveal Himself not only to a few prophets but "as the lightning shineth" to all His people. In spite of the Lord's admonition about deceivers, thousands have been led astray by false Christs and false prophets. In fact, the very widespread deception of nominal Christian people constitute a sign of the last days as is pointed out by the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1. (See also Matthew 24:11.)

Verses 6 and 7 — "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Are wars, famines, and earthquakes sure signs of the end?

We are all eager to identify the signs of the Lord's coming, and we are confident that we are living in a time when there is a remarkable accumulation of all the various signs of the last days; however, we must not miss the point our Lord is making in this chapter and fasten upon certain conditions as sure signs of the end which are not by themselves signs at all. It is just as important for us to avoid deception as it is for us to recognize the signs of the end. Such conditions as wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are not unfailing signs of the end, nor does the Lord here say that they are. What He does, in fact, say is that there will always be wars, famines, earthquakes and calamities which men interpret as the sign of the end, but which are not necessarily so. These are only the beginning of sorrows and Christ said about them, "but the end is not yet." We must keep in mind the fact that the Lord may come for His Church at any time, and that there will always be some kinds of trouble and unrest present to keep us looking up. There will be troubles and sorrows and calamities during this whole age, but at the end there will be a time of great trouble, sorrow, pestilence and warfare. We are always to be watchful for the Lord's coming, but we are not to attach special significance to signs such as those just mentioned until other more specific signs are added to them, such as the appearance of a world dictator who is the incarnation of Satan, and the restoration of the nation of Israel. (See Matthew 24:15-43.)

Verse 8 — "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Evidently in the latter days the troubles and strife will increase, but even this intensification of woes is not to be construed as the time of the end or as the Great Tribulation which cannot begin until the antichrist comes on the scene. At the end of the period called the "beginning of sorrows" the Church will be caught up to escape the greater sorrow of the Great Tribulation. (See Luke 21:36.)

Verse 9 — "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

Christ's followers are not to be greatly surprised if they suffer persecution and are hated for Christ's sake during this age. The ungodly forces which will finally head up in a Satanic world dictatorship are now

operative in the world and the forces that actually influence this present world civilization. The nominal church has sometimes gained temporarily a place of esteem, but true vital Christianity has always been a rather troublesome and irritating phenomenon to the powers that be. Evidently, the persecution of the believers will become more intense as the end approaches.

Verses 10 - 12 — *“And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”*

These verses describe the lamentable state of the nominal church during this age and up until the end. So-called Christians will hate one another and betray one another, a fact so painfully true that it hardly needs to be commented upon. Only the Lord knows how often we, in our denominational strife and sectarianism, have betrayed and hated one another. Furthermore, much of the division in the Church's ranks during this age is to be caused by false prophets who will deceive and mislead, a prophecy which has been fulfilled to the letter. The dark picture is completed by a prediction that the sorrows and persecutions of the age will occasion the apostasy of many who, like Demas, forsook the Lord's cause for the love of the present world. Everywhere we look, we see that the love of many has waxed cold because they are not willing to pay the price of vigilant overcoming Christian experience.

Verse 13 — *“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”*

In spite of the widespread coldness and apostasy, and in spite of the persecution and sorrow, there will be a body of true overcomers who will endure to the end and who will be saved at the Lord's coming. (See Revelation 3:10; 3:21.)

Verse 14 — *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”*

One sign that the end of the age is approaching is that of the world-wide extension of the preaching of the gospel. It does not here say that all men will be converted, but that the gospel will be preached to every nation as a witness. There are certainly very few places in the world today where the gospel has not been at least a strong witness. In this day of rapid transportation and communication vast areas can hear the witness in a very brief period of time. The great airliners are carrying evangelists today to every corner of the earth, and even behind the iron curtain there are great revivals. All true believers do well today to keep the upward look. At any hour of morning, night or noon the Bridegroom may come.

EXPOSITION OF LUKE 21:24-36

Verse 24 — *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until*

the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

The first part of this verse perhaps refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 at which time the Holy City was totally devastated by the Roman general Titus. Not one stone remained upon another as Jesus had prophesied and as a result of the calamity the Jews were more widely scattered among the nations. For more than six hundred years the land of Palestine had been a subject state under the dominion of Gentile empires, but from A.D. 70 on, the Jew indeed became the wandering Jew without a homeland. Only God could have foreseen the amazing fact of the Jew's dispersion among all nations in a sense not applicable to any other race of people in all history.

During the centuries the second part of this verse has been fulfilled. Jerusalem, indeed, as no other city, has been constantly trodden down by the Gentiles. The great miracle is the survival of the city in spite of so many destructions. Cities of far greater size and earthly glory have completely perished. Jerusalem has survived because it is an important barometer of prophecy. The final events will occur around Jerusalem and the final struggle will be fought to capture this much violated city. We do well to keep our eyes upon the Holy City for there we will find the plainest signs of the Lord's coming. That is happening in Jerusalem now which has not happened in centuries. All indications are that the final act in the drama of Gentile imperialism is now being played and Jerusalem is the stage.

The phrase *“time of the Gentiles”* is a very interesting one. This very significant prophetic phrase refers to the period of history during which Israel remains in subjection to the Gentile nations. The book of Deuteronomy contains a prophecy predicting the captivity and subjection of Israel to the Gentiles, a captivity which would be the result of Israel's disobedience and sin (Deuteronomy 28:28-68). The prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar took Israel captive in B.C. 606. This same Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a great image which prophetically portrayed the march of Gentile world powers beginning with Babylonia and continuing until the coming of the Lord (Daniel 2). Daniel, himself, had a vision of four beasts which represented the same four world empires of Babylonia — 606-538 B.C., Medo-Persia — 538-330 B.C., Greece — 330-63 B.C., and Rome 63-? The tenfold partition of the Roman empire has yet to be fulfilled, but could take shape very quickly, for the final ruler of the last Gentile world empire will be the “antichrist.” The antichrist (the beast of Revelation 13) will organize and lead the last Gentile forces against the Jews, but he will be defeated and slain by the Lord Himself at His coming with all His saints.

The term *“times of the Gentiles”* is an important one for it describes a period the end of which will be marked by the coming of the Lord. When the Lord comes, the Jews will accept Him at long last as their Messiah and as a result will dwell in their land in peace and independence for the thousand years of the millennium.

The division of the Gentile nations into two camps or spheres, and the reestablishment of the Jews in

Palestine under their own flag seem to point to the early fulfillment of the "times of the Gentiles."

Verse 24 seems to indicate that there would be a considerable lapse of time between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the consequent scattering of the Jews through all nations, and the events of the end time predicted in the following verses, twenty-five through twenty-eight. For nearly twenty centuries Jerusalem has continually been trodden down, but perhaps her redemption is not far away. During these twenty centuries the Lord has been taking for Himself a bride from among the Gentile nations. The bride will be caught up before the antichrist comes on the scene and before the final conflict between the last Gentile world power and the returned people of Israel.

Verse 25 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What will be the conditions among the nations in the last days?

The signs foretold here will not come into full manifestation until the time of the Great Tribulation, especially those of the sun, moon, and stars; but the social and political upheavals will be apparent for some time before the rapture. The Church will not see the full development of these signs, but during the time preceding the rapture called "the beginning of sorrows" or "shadows of tribulation," when these signs are beginning to develop, their prophetic character will be sufficiently clear to show us what is about to come to pass.

The political situation of the last days is here described by the phrase "distress of nations." That is, such will be the international relationships that distress, anxiety and bewilderment will prevail everywhere. The statesmen themselves will have no solution for the complex problems that will arise. The "distress of nations" is further explained by the word "perplexity" meaning that there will be absolutely no way out of the mounting difficulties. Escape from disaster will be obviously impossible from any human point of view. The word translated "perplexity" means literally an anguish caused by having no way out. "A-poria" is a compound formed from two words, one of which means "a ford" or "crossing," with the negative prefix which means "no" or "not." The distress of nations in the end times will be caused by an encircling peril out of which there is no way of escape.

What will cause this embarrassment of nations will be the "sea and the waves roaring." The "sea" in prophetic Scripture refers to the masses of humanity. The "roaring" apparently means unrest and revolution among the

masses; revolution and anarchy on an international scale; perhaps a movement led by the "antichrist" — who at first may not be recognized as the antichrist. In Revelation 13, the "beast" — another name for the "antichrist" — will arise out of the sea, a symbol of the masses. A comparison of Luke 21:25 and Revelation 13:1,2 suggests that the upheaval of the masses that will cause the "distress of nations" will be the same movement that will cause the "beast" to arise. No doubt this surge of the "sea" — that is, of the masses — will appear for some time before the "beast" comes clearly upon the scene. Certainly there is an upheaval of the masses today seen in the communistic movements in all the nations, and who is not aware of the distress of nations caused by the surge of communism?

Since the publication of the works of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and the organization of various socialistic and communistic societies, especially since the Russian Communistic Revolution in 1917, the class struggle has been intensifying and spreading from country to country. No government is now altogether secure against an uprising of the masses. The passing of laws to suppress communism and other subversive groups is an indication of the mounting fear that even the best regulated governments have of the restless masses. The roaring of the sea is striking terror to men's hearts around the world. If the soul hunger of mankind is not satisfied by communion with God through Jesus Christ, it will be exploited by demagogues who use the masses for their aggrandizement. The stage is now set, apparently or the "man of sin" who will be the most successful dictator of the masses in all history. The "roar of the sea" is certainly becoming sufficiently audible to warrant our looking up in expectation of our Redeemer.

Verse 26 — "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

After the rapture the consternation will become so great among those left behind that men's hearts will fail them for fear. Even now the fear and dread occasioned by the prospect of an atomic war to the finish is nearly worldwide, but the most frightening thing is the conviction that no one has a plan to avert the coming catastrophe. The coming of the Lord seems to be the only hope.

Verse 27 — "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

This verse refers to the second stage of the Lord's coming which we call His "revelation." The rapture will have taken place long before this "coming."

Verse 28 — "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

The "redemption" spoken of in this verse is the rapture, the translation of the saints. This is the blessed hope. Note that this event takes place as soon as the signs mentioned in the preceding verses "begin to come to pass."

This phrase, "your redemption draweth nigh," un-

questionably refers, not to the final coming or "revelation," but to the first stage of the Lord's advent which we call the rapture. The word translated "redemption" ... Greek "apo-lutrosis" ... has reference to that final act of our redemption by which we are fully possessed by our Redeemer. The Greek word is a combination of two words meaning "redemption" and "from." When the Lord comes for His people they will be fully redeemed in the sense that they will be taken *from* the scene of their enslavement. At the cross we were redeemed in the sense that the redemption price was paid. When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, we are saved by faith, but we await our final salvation. When the Lord comes we shall be redeemed not only from the curse, power, and penalty of sin, but from the presence of sin. He who has paid the price of our redemption will take full possession of His purchase, removing us from the sphere of sin and mortality. We now enjoy our redemption (lutrosis), but when Christ comes we will enter into our full redemption (apo-lutrosis). *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption (apo-lutrosis) of our body"* (Romans 8:23).

Now, we are to expect our final redemption as soon as we see these signs *"begin to come to pass."* The full, unmistakable manifestation of the signs will not appear until the "man of sin" comes into power, 2 Thessalonians 2:3; but there will be a sufficiently clear appearance of preliminary signs leading up to the conditions of the Great Tribulation so that discerning Bible readers will be able to recognize the hour of His approach. Is it not significant that fundamental Bible interpreters the world around are becoming increasingly expectant of the Lord's coming?

Certainly, there are signs enough in evidence today to make us believe that the events of the end time are already *"beginning to come to pass."* We shall continue to *"occupy till He comes,"* but we shall also *"look up and lift up our heads"* in expectation of our complete redemption which was purchased upon the cross.

Verses 29 - 31 — *"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."*

In prophetic typology, the fig tree symbolizes Israel. There seems to be a reference in verse 29 to the restoration of Israel to her own land as a sign of the last days. Israel, a dead tree, nationally, for centuries, has recently put forth her leaves in a national re-birth. Does this not seem to indicate that the summer is nigh? Everything that happens to Israel and to Palestine has some biblical and prophetic significance. These recent developments in Palestine cannot fail to have some meaning relative to the consummation of the age. Not only is Israel budding, but there are signs in the other nations (*"and all the trees"*) of activities predicted of the end time. Who will say that the summer is not nigh?

Verse 32 - 33 — *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away."*

Some have interpreted the word "generation" as meaning "race" and have taken this verse to mean that Israel would not pass away as a race or people until all these signs were fulfilled. While it is true that Israel's survival is promised in various passages of Scripture, it is not likely that this verse prophesies it. The explanation that best fits the context is that the generation that sees the signs of the Second Coming begin to come to pass will not pass away until the rapture takes place. In other words, the first appearance of the signs and the rapture will take place within a generation. The term *"this generation"* cannot refer to the generation living in Christ's day for nearly a hundred generations have passed since the predictions were made on Mt. Olivet. The signs mentioned cannot, either, refer only to the destruction of Jerusalem, because they were not "all" fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. When we consider the tremendous changes that have taken place within the range of our own memory in the political and scientific spheres, we are not likely to doubt that all the signs of the Second Advent could be fulfilled within one generation. Even with our ultra-rapid means of communication it is difficult for us to keep up with the rapidly changing kaleidoscope of history. Our own may be the generation of greatest opportunity in all history. Let us make the most of it.

Verse 34 — *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."*

The tragedy of our day is that men are resorting to drunkenness and pleasure, seeking to drown their fears and cares instead of resorting to prayer and worship. Such will be overtaken by tribulation. The Lord's coming will be to them as the midnight visit of a thief. It behooves the Church to accelerate its programs of evangelism as never before and to call men to prayer that they may be counted worthy to escape the dreadful things coming upon the earth. Already the fig tree is putting forth its leaves; may God give us wisdom to read the signs of the times.

Verse 35 — *"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."*

This statement surely does away with the post-millennial doctrine which represents the world as becoming better and better until the millennium is achieved by the work of the Church. The Church is to evangelize as a witness and to win for Christ a people for His name's sake, but not to make the world into a millennium; something that only the Lord, Himself, can accomplish by His coming. The coming of Christ is not to a world made righteous and peaceful by the conquest of religion, but to a world in distress, mutiny, and perversity. The sudden coming of Christ will be as a snare upon a world plunged in surfeiting and drunkenness; one unaware and unprepared. In spite of the millions who are being won to Christ and made ready for

the rapture, the world itself is not being made better. Both Bible prophecy and actual history are against the doctrine of post-millennialism. The decisive effect of the gospel is upon individuals, not upon societies and civilizations. The so-called Christian civilizations, societies and nations have been Christians only superficially.

Verse 36 — *“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Will the praying Church escape the tribulation?*

Verses 28 and 36 seem to refer to the same event, namely, the rapture of the Church. The only escape from the Great Tribulation will be the rapture. Some object to this on the grounds that worthiness is not earned by prayer, but by faith in Christ; but we must take into account that conditions will be such in the last days and are now such that only by much prayer do we maintain our faith. Apparently prayerless, superficial Christians will be unprepared for His coming; otherwise, why the warning of verse 34? This whole discourse was delivered for the sake of disciples. True consecrated believers will be made even more prayerful in the face of the trying times. While judgment is poured out upon the earth, the saints will stand before the Son of Man and will receive their crown of righteousness.

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 24:37 - 39

Verse 37 — *“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

The days of Noah were days near the end of a dispensation just as the days of Christ's coming will be at the close of this dispensation. Just as Noah was preparing a way of escape from impending disaster for a minority of believers in a corrupt civilization, so we are preaching the gospel of Christ with the purpose of calling out of a doomed civilization a redeemed people for the Lord. The days of Noah were days of coming judgment, so will the days of Christ's coming be days of impending judgment.

Verse 38 — *“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.”*

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*In what ways will the latter days be like Noah's days?*

In Noah's day they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage with no thought of anything except the purely physical routine of life. They did not deny God's existence, but they lived as though God did not exist, and as if they had no eternal souls. Their concern was for the body only; they ignored their real selves. Like animals they lived only from day to day, satisfying only their fleshly impulses. They fixed their attention upon the earth with no thought of heaven. They had become so attached to the carnal life they considered anyone queer and abnormal who had spiritual desires or interests.

Likewise, in the last days, men will live like animals in a constant fleshly routine. Life will mean nothing more than eating, drinking, marrying, and surviving. Christian people who have yearnings after God who feed their spirits and souls as well as their bodies will be considered somewhat queer and abnormal. Second Advent preaching will be met with scorn and ridicule. Millions will be spent on liquor, theaters, gambling and pleasures, while little will be spent for that which cultivates the soul. Soldiers will march away to fight bloody wars and die on lonely beaches while those at home revel in drunkenness and exploit the crises for greedy gain. If this describes the conditions of the day in which we now live, then perhaps it is time to look up and lift up our heads.

Verse 39 — *“And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

In Noah's day, the most grievous sin was that of indifference. Indifference to their spiritual needs and indifference to the coming disaster. They neither took heed of the warnings of the flood, nor availed themselves of the way of escape. The day of destruction found them completely unprepared. When Jesus comes again He will find men just as indifferent as they were in the day of Noah. If Christ were to come today, He would find the world more concerned with carnal satisfaction than with preparation for eternity.

EXPOSITION OF 2 TIMOTHY 3:1 - 7

Verse 1 — *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*

The last days are described as perilous times. The word translated “perilous” means “hard to bear or endure.” It will be difficult for godly people to bear the rotten civilization, perverted by greed, vanity, arrogance and selfishness. Perhaps it will be difficult also to resist the trend toward worldliness, so that much prayer and Bible study will be necessary in order to remain victorious.

Paul is careful to indicate that he is making a divinely inspired prophecy. Verse 1 of 2 Timothy 3, begins with the words “this know.” He here refers to divinely revealed knowledge. The perilous times are not what he imagined, nor what he would have expected. As a holy man of God moved upon by the Spirit, he was informed that the latter times would be perilous. Paul no doubt refers to the same revelation alluded to in 1 Timothy 4:12

when he wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." To a certain extent, there would always be perilous times, but in the end times even the Christians would find difficulty in resisting the power of evil.

Verse 2 — "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What will be the nature of worldly men in the last days?

The only love will be love of self. It is no wonder that civilization will completely disintegrate, for without some love for others and willingness to serve others, there can be no ordered society. Today we see every indication of the breakdown of society for lack of altruistic service. When human beings become entirely self-centered they cease to respect God, government, and even parents.

If there is any trait that is basically satanic it is love of self. Sin and self are practically synonymous. The original sin in heaven was a selfish act of Lucifer who sought to set himself up on an equal plane with God, if not on a higher plane. Selfishness cast Lucifer and a third part of the angelic hosts out of heaven. Selfishness was the sin of Adam and Eve who sought to be like God, knowing good and evil. The fall of man consisted of the loss of God's full image and the enthronement in God's place of the "ego." The more perverse and devilish men become, the more selfish, proud, vain, and contentious they will be. The more that the "man of sin" prevails the more selfishness will manifest itself. It is the basic deep rooted selfishness of man that makes the elimination of war an impossibility. Consequently, the upsurge of satanic influence in the last days will be marked by the increase of wars and bloodshed. Man was originally created to be God-centered, but through the fall into sin he has become self-centered or ego-centric. Regeneration means the enthronement of Christ at the "center of one's life." That experience through which one ceases to be ego-centric and becomes Christ-centric is accurately called the born again experience. Only a rebirth will dethrone self and enthrone Christ. One is truly Christian to the extent that he submerges self interest in the service of God and humanity.

Verse 3 — "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good."

Good people are usually loved, but latter-day society will be characterized by the hatred of good people. Men will not have natural affection so great will be their perversion. The spirit of lawlessness will turn men into devils. When the "man of sin" arrives he will find men ready to do his bidding. When men reject God, they fall

into Satan's grasp and become devils. Paul describes in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, the fate of the God rejecters of the last days: *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

Verse 4 — "Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Men who love pleasure more than they love God, their Maker, are deserving of the awful fate that awaits them. Let us take heed, for in our day more money is spent on liquor and the theater than is spent on education or religion.

An exaggerated devotion to pleasure seeking has characterized every civilization in the decline of its history. Belshazzar's feast was the last of a series of such drunken parties. It was interrupted by a telegram from heaven announcing Babylon's doom. That same night the city and empire fell. The decline of the Roman empire was a time of circuses, spectacles, games, and drunken orgies. Man was not made to live merely for physical sensation; he was created to have communion with God, and to serve God by serving humanity as a witness for truth. When men love pleasures more than they love God, they have descended to the animal plane. Such are easy victims of the "man of sin."

Verse 5 — "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away . . ."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What kind of religion will prevail in the end time?

The prophetic Word does not predict the cessation of religion. Man is incurably religious; he will always worship something even if his god is the devil. Even in the indescribably perilous times preceding the coming of Christ, men will have their forms of religion. Religion is neither good nor bad, necessarily. It may be divine or satanic.

Even religion itself will be very superficial in the last days. It will consist largely of a form of godliness, but there will be no faith in the real power of God to transform. Men will go through the motions of religious worship, but they will live like sinners, making mockery of true faith. The antichrist, no doubt, will make use of powerless, faithless religion.

We do not preach religion, but salvation through faith in the redemptive work of Christ. However, much of what poses as Christianity is only a form of godliness. The

antichrist, an imitation of Christ, will have a church, but one composed of religious persons to whom religion is merely a form. (Revelation 13:11,12.) True believers must separate themselves from sham religion just as they separate themselves from the world. Formal ecclesiastical systems have always been willing for the sake of prestige to become the tool of political powers. The true Church is obligated to no political power, and seeks no group's favor at the expense of God's smile of approval. If the antichrist came on the scene today, he would find ecclesiastical groups willing to court his favor.

Verse 7 — *“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

The last days will be days of cultural and scientific advancement, but at the same time days of spiritual ignorance.

The greatest scientific progress in history has been that of the past two centuries. More progress in invention

has been made in the past two centuries than that which was made in two millenniums previously. Knowledge has, indeed, been increased in these times, even if wisdom has not increased. (See Daniel 12:4.) George Washington had hardly any greater comforts or facilities for work than those possessed by Julius Ceasar; but if Washington were to visit us today, he would be amazed at our gadgets. However, Mr. Washington would not find us more God fearing, nor more just, nor more Christian. With all our learning we are no nearer, as a people, to the knowledge of the truth. We now know too much for our own safety. Science is out of control. Our inventions have become our enemies. It is now time to seek after the knowledge of the truth. It is later than we think.

Today we can even exploit the atom's power, but we do not know how to control a perverse human nature that will use atomic energy to destroy the world. We know all the facts except the central fact. In these last days, however, it is better to know Christ than to know all else besides.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: If Jesus would come today, we should be spared many toils, cares and trials, but we should also have to leave behind many unsaved friends and neighbors whom we might win if we had more time. We are not wrong in singing, “I'll be so glad when Jesus comes,” but we who sing it must make the most of our remaining time.

If Jesus would come today and as a believer you would be raptured with the Church, who would you leave behind? Lead the class to ask the Lord to direct them in making a prayer list of those whom they know who need to know the Saviour. Encourage them to make a daily effort to pray for each of them and to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in witnessing to them.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *Of what is Jesus concerned in Matthew 24:4?* _____

2. *Are wars, famines, and earthquakes sure signs of the end?*

3. *What will be the conditions among the nations in the last days?* _____

4. *Will the praying Church escape the tribulation?* _____

5. *In what ways will the latter days be like Noah's day?* _____

6. *What will be the nature of worldly men in the last days?* _____

7. *What kind of religion will prevail in the end time?* _____

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND THE ANTICHRIST

AIM: To understand what will take place during the Great Tribulation by observing the description given it in Scripture. Also, to gain insight into the character of the antichrist, who will appear after the rapture and during the Great Tribulation by studying the names given antichrist in the Word of God.

KEY VERSES:

See Revelation 6:1-8 and 13:1-15.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Read Revelation 6:1-8. Direct class members in writing a song or poem of praise to God for salvation, and therefore their escape from the Great Tribulation that will follow the rapture of the Church.

If you are working alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The last lesson concerned the signs of the coming of Christ. A great many of the signs of the end time, as was pointed out, will not be fully manifested until the time of great world-wide crisis known as the Great Tribulation. The tribulation's approach will be obvious enough to the Bible-reading believers who are the "children of the light," but the Great Tribulation, itself, will not begin until after the Church has been raptured.

The Great Tribulation which will immediately precede the final coming of Christ, is widely predicted in the Bible. Almost every detailed Bible passage which refers to the Second Advent refers also, directly or indirectly, to this great universal time of trouble. Daniel says, "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book*" (Daniel 12:1).

The world is drifting toward a crisis — its last great crisis. All wrong, injustice, lust, cruelty, pride, and selfish ambition will be permitted to come to a head. All of fallen human nature will be permitted to manifest itself in a single individual who will rule the nations during a brief orgy of diabolical supremacy. "The prince of this world" will be permitted briefly to set up his full dictatorship over the nations — the nations which he could not trade to Jesus for His allegiance. The whole world will be permitted to see the harvest which sinful self-sufficiency will produce. Rebellion and irreverence have always brought on a crisis, but the final crisis at the end of this age will be the greatest of all crises. However, we must not conclude that God has lost control of earth's affairs.

"The darkest hour comes just before the dawn." All through the ever darkening night of history God has been moving in His mysterious way, gathering out of the world a people who will through the eternal ages be to His praise and glory.

This is sin's day in the world, but the triumph of holiness is coming. Selfishness now wears the crown, but the coronation day of godliness will not be long delayed. It is easy to be deceived by the apparent triumph of sin but "be not deceived, God is not mocked." Sin will not bring happiness, but rather a Great Tribulation, after which sin will be dethroned and Christ enthroned.

The Lord who is "standing somewhere in the shadows" will catch His people away before the Great Tribulation begins. The Church is not destined to pass through the earth's hour of trial, but to escape all these things coming upon the earth. In view of this fact, believers may see no reason to be interested in the details of the great crisis; however, on second thought, we shall, indeed, be interested, for our love for all men will move us to lament the troubles of others among whom may be found some of our neighbors, friends and loved ones. Christians are, in fact, interested in the divine plan of the ages and all that leads up to Christ's final triumph over sin.

What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:21,22— "*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*"

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★How will the tribulation compare with other times of trouble in history?

Our Lord, no doubt, has in mind the prophecies of Daniel concerning the world powers or empires and their final dissolution and judgment before the reign of the King of

Kings. The language of Christ is here strikingly like that of Daniel in 12:1, but He adds important details not divulged by the prophet. Both Daniel and our Lord agree that the great crisis will be the most intense tribulation in all the history of the world; it will be the final judgment of the earth in preparation for a perfect kingdom. Man has always failed God under every covenant, bringing the dispensations to an end with the outpouring of wrath. The Edenic age came to an end with the expulsion of Adam and Eve and the pronouncement of the curse. The antediluvian age ended with the flood which brought universal desolation. The postdiluvian age ended with the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the various peoples. The patriarchal age closed with the bondage in Egypt; and the Mosaic age terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel among all nations. During this age of grace the Lord has been gathering a people for Himself out of all nations, kindreds, and tribes, but on the political and social levels sin has continued to abound and God has been ignored in the plans of the nations. One more judgment is required to usher in a righteous kingdom over which He who alone is able will reign in holiness and justice. In Matthew 24, Jesus definitely identifies Himself as that universal King who, after Great Tribulation, is to rule in power and glory.

Daniel 9:27 — *“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”*

This verse is a part of Daniel's description of his vision of the *seventy weeks*. Sixty-nine weeks (weeks of years) were to transpire between the edict to rebuild Jerusalem (after the Babylonian captivity) and the coming of the Messiah (in His first advent). This part of the prophecy was exactly fulfilled (69 weeks of years, 7 years to a week; 69 X 7 equal 483 years.) Precisely 483 years intervened between the two events. There is yet one more week (7 years) of prophetic time left in which God will deal with Israel and judge the nations for Israel's mistreatment. The tribulation will be essentially a Jewish period; that is, God's first purpose will be to bring Israel to recognize the true Messiah, but God will also bring an end to Gentile world dominion which will head up at the end time under the leadership of the beast or antichrist.

Apparently at the beginning of the seven year tribulation period the antichrist's interference with the Jews, who will be restored to their ancient land; but in the midst of the week (seven years) the Jews will break this covenant because of the antichrist's interference with the temple sacrifices and worship. The beast (*“abomination of desolation”* in Matthew 24:15; Daniel 11:31; 12:11) will then persecute the Jews in great tribulation for three and one-half years (1290 days Daniel 12:11). There is not space here to go into the whole prophecy of the *seventy weeks*, but Daniel 9:27 is sufficient to establish that the tribulation will last seven years.

Jeremiah 30:3,7 — *“For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people*

Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Why is the tribulation called Jacob's trouble?*

Here is a clear prophecy of the return of Israel to Palestine under circumstances which have never in the past been fulfilled. This is yet future. Already Israel is being restored in her ancient land. This must be fully accomplished before the last week. Israel's re-establishment in the Holy Land is the greatest miracle of history and the most significant of all prophetic fulfillments.

The tribulation is the time of Jacob's trouble. In spite of Israel's repatriation, there are times of great trouble ahead. However, while the great crisis will be a bitter trial, the result will be the salvation of Israel.

Revelation 6:1-8

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*When will the seals be opened? Who is the rider of the white horse? What does the red horse represent? What does the black horse represent? What is the name of the rider of the pale horse?*

●Verse 1 — *“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.”*

The opening of the seals in revelation 6 is in preparation for Christ's taking possession of the kingdoms of the world. The “book” in Revelation 5:1,2, is the title deed to the earth. The opening of the seals signifies the taking of possession. Before Christ can reign, however, the nations must be judged, purged, and sifted. Satan will be given one more chance to work in the hearts of the perverse in order that he may reveal himself to be what he truly is and what sin is. *Individuals* must now choose between Christ and sin, *nations* will then be tried in their choice between Christ and antichrist.

●Verse 2 — *“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.”*

The four horsemen represent the movements and trends during the great crisis, under the leadership of the beast. Each horse represents some aspect of antichrist's strategy. It is a mistake to see in the white

horse the victory of Christ. The Lord will triumph at the end, but the white horse here belongs with the other three. As antichrist, he will pose as a white rider of justice in order to deceive. He has a bow but no arrows. His first move is a peaceful one of propaganda and the signing of covenants. Satan often rides a white horse, but let no one be deceived, for the white is not a fast color.

•Verses 3 & 4 — *“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”*

When peaceful and legal methods no longer serve his purpose, the “man of sin” will turn to war, strife, and treachery. Peace cannot long run side by side with sin and deceit. The tribulation will be characterized by civil wars and class struggles.

•Verses 5 & 6 — *“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barely for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”*

The meager stores of living goods will be apportioned, according to Revelation 13, to those only who take the “beast’s” mark or number. He who does not pay allegiance to Satan’s regime will starve. Such economic strangulation will impose a terrible temptation upon any who are of a mind to resist the antichrist. Now is the time to pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape the Great Tribulation.

•Verses 7 & 8 — *“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”*

Propaganda of deceit, war, famine, and then follows death. Death and hell are Siamese twins. The wages of sin is death. Even so men will consider the grave a welcome relief to the war and famine of the great crisis, but only because they cannot see that hell and the grave are one, unless they are on God’s side.

Revelation 7:14 — *“And I said unto him, Sir thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

Those who resist the program of the “beast” will pay with their lives, but evidently some remembering the truth of the gospel will gladly die, in defiance of the antichrist’s requirements, putting their hope in Christ the Son of God. The group of tribulation saints seems to be a large one, but they have endured untold suffering to enter into life. Whatever may be the nature of the reward

and position of these tribulation saints, we are sure that the bride of Christ will be composed only of those who are ready at the rapture.

The Nature of the Tribulation

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Trouble

Jesus said of that day, according to Mark’s Gospel (13:14,19): *“But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not - then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: for in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.”* The Great Tribulation has been called by Jeremiah the time of Jacob’s trouble, and it will indeed, be a time of great trouble for the Jews who will at that time have been regathered in Palestine. They, who have suffered untold afflictions for centuries, will then pass through their severest trial because of their faithfulness to the worship of Jehovah. The woes of the tribulation will affect some more than others, but before it reaches its end it will heap trouble upon all. Those who are not troubled by the antichrist or by the conditions he will cause, will be troubled from heaven.

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Totalitarianism

The world has suffered greatly in our time from the dictatorships of Hitler, Mussolini, et cetera, but there will yet be set up the most absolute and tyrannical dictatorship ever to exist. During the great world crisis, all governments will be consolidated under the rule of the beast who will permit no competition. So powerful will his armies be that no nation will dare to make war with him. In his diabolical cleverness, he will invent secret weapons much more destructive even than the atomic bomb, by which he will be able to terrorize all potential enemies.

Furthermore, the totalitarian rule will be so centralized and powerful that all the economic system will be controlled by one will. No one will be able to buy, sell, nor earn a living without relinquishing all independence to the dictator. There will be no personal freedom; all will be slaves of the state. Anyone who rebels will thereby cut off his means of living. Democracy will be abolished everywhere.

Even religion will be centrally governed and regulated. There will be no freedom of worship. The earth will be ruled by hell, and Satan will be deified and made the sole object of devotion. There will be church unity in that day, but unity based upon compulsory acceptance of false doctrine. Any who, remembering the truth of the gospel of Christ, rebels against the established religion, will be put to death.

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of War

While the beast is rising to the place of supremacy, he will make war upon all who oppose his ambitions. His

methods of warfare will be terrible, and so decisive will be his victories that all at last will submit themselves before him in awe and wonder. For a while there will be peace due to inability of any to war against the beast, but at the end of the crisis, his persistent persecution of the Jews will provoke some nations to rebel in sympathy for Israel's cause. A war will ensue that will be decided by the return of Christ with His armies. (See Revelation 19; Zechariah 14:1-4.)

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Famine

War is always followed by famine. After the red horse of war follows the black horse of starvation. Perhaps the scarcities caused by the beast's wars will be the excuse used for bringing all economic controls under a central bureau. World-wide hunger and starvation will be partly responsible for the "beast's" power, for hungry people have little strength to rebel and little moral force to do so when the little food they do get for themselves and their families depends upon their acquiescence. (See Revelation 13:16,17.) Already the population of the earth has become so great that any disturbance of the crops would bring a famine. Even with our abundance, half the inhabitants of the world are undernourished. If, in another war, the farms of America should be destroyed by bombings or marching armies as were the farms of Europe in the last war, a famine of indescribable proportions would result. Inasmuch as the last days will be days of wars and rumors of wars, they will also be days of great famine and pestilence. Now is the time to turn to God before such days begin.

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Deception

Deception will extend into all phases of life during the crisis. Men will be deceived into believing that it is necessary to put all power into the "beast's" control. They will be deceived into thinking that his dictatorship is for the good of the world. Deception will lead men to respect and even to revere Antichrist. Men have always been more impressed with material success than with truth and righteousness. The "beast's" overwhelming successes and exploits will cause foolish men to believe that he is right, because might, to them, will be right. Perhaps the greatest deception will be in the religious sphere. By Satanic power an image of the beast will speak wonders. Tricks of demon power will be used to demonstrate the superhuman nature of the dictator. Spiritism will have its widest acceptance in all history. A lamb-like beast will arise (Revelation 13:11-14) whose mission is to deceive and to direct all worship to the first beast. Men who now scoff at the Christian faith may, perhaps, soon accept a lie and follow a completely false religion.

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Blasphemy

The word "devil" (Greek "diabolos") means "slanderer." It is the purpose of Satan to degrade the name of the Lord. All profanity that takes the name of God in vain is Satan inspired. During the tribulation the chief objective

of the beast will be that of blaspheming and of causing others to blaspheme against God. His name written upon his seven heads is "Blasphemy," (Revelation 13:1). In all his speeches Antichrist will profane the divine name and every sacred thing. So deluded will men be during the great crisis that they will curse their Creator, and desecrate the name of their greatest benefactor. Here is rebellion in its worst form. Here is the heart of man in its most depraved condition.

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Fear

Not only will men be fearful of the great dictator, of his wars, of famine and pestilence, and of the beast's wrath, but they will fear even more, in the latter part of the tribulation, the awful signs of God's wrath that will appear in the heavens. So great will be their fear that men's hearts will fail them. In spite of their cursing of God, sinners will be overcome by a presentiment of coming judgment. The inhabitants of the earth will at last be terror stricken as they see themselves with no way of escape, either from the conditions on earth, or from the divine wrath. Oh that man would be reconciled to God before such times begin (Luke 21:24-28).

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Judgment

The great crisis will be a time of judgment for all the inhabitants of the earth and for all nations. Sin is permitted to come to a head that it may be judged fully. In the fires of God's judgment everything will be destroyed that is perishable. (See Revelation 14:6,7; 18:9,10; 19:1,2.)

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Persecution

The Great Tribulation will be a time of intense persecution for all who stand for God and against the heresy of the beast. It will be a time of persecution for Israel, God's ancient chosen people, who in the hour of trial will turn to the Lord as they have not turned to Him for centuries. Jacob's trouble will result in Jacob's salvation. The faithfulness of Israel will provoke the beast to insane wrath, but the coming Messiah will rescue His people. (See Zechariah 14.) All Gentiles who turn to the Lord will be put to death or will starve, but in their martyrdom they will find salvation and a place among the tribulation saints. (See revelation 7:9-17.)

The Tribulation Will Be a Time of Triumph

When sin has run its course and Satan has done his worst, then He, "without whom was not anything made," will appear in splendid triumph over the Satanic trinity. After the awful darkness that will mark sinful man's last hours of self-willed rule, there will suddenly break the dawn of righteous government, for the Sun of Righteousness will rise triumphantly with healing in His wings. The purpose of the Apocalypse is to show the final triumph of righteousness over sin and of Christ over Satan. In these times, when we are tempted to doubt God's control over human affairs, it is greatly encourag-

ing to turn to the last pages of the story of mankind and to read of the triumphant ascension of the King of Glory to the throne of the world. Let us even now crown Him Lord of all.

THE ANTICHRIST

The apostle Paul plainly declares what will be the inevitable result of unbelief. *"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thessalonians 2:11,12). If men will not have the truth, they will be given a lie. If they will not live righteously, they shall be made to experience unrighteousness to its Satanic excess, along with its infernal consequences. If men refuse to serve and follow Christ, they will be ruled by His exact opposite - the antichrist. Men have always thought that they could run the world without Christ; they soon will see the inevitable result of building a Christless civilization when Satan incarnate assumes dictatorship of an order based upon selfishness.

If mankind will not have a unified world in Christ's way, they shall have it unified under the tyranny of the antichrist, under him, *"whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved"* (2 Thessalonians 2:9,10).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Men reap what they sow; nations reap what they sow, and so shall a sinful world reap what it has sown. The tribulation will be the harvest of centuries of sowing sin, greed, pride, strife, and selfish ambition. The antichrist will be the personification of all the pride, greed, malice, hatred and selfish cleverness of history. The antichrist will embody all those factors of worldly success that unregenerate men admire. If civilization continues to go in the direction it has been headed, the beast's dictatorship cannot be avoided. If the world will not accept unity on the principles of Christ, one must come and rule who is strong enough, and ruthless enough to crush every opposing will.

That such a dictator will appear is widely predicted in the Scriptures. He is clearly described in the seventh chapter of Daniel, especially in verses 8 - 14, and his defeat by the Son of Man at His coming is unmistakably delineated. Jesus refers to the antichrist in Matthew 24. Paul mentions this deceiver in 2 Thessalonians 2, and John the apostle predicts his appearance in his epistles (1 John 2:18,22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7) and in the Revelation, chapter 13 et seq.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Where do we find the word "antichrist" in the Bible?

According to Paul, in 2 Thessalonians the second chapter, the antichrist cannot appear until the Church is taken out of the world. True believers will not be present on the earth when the beast arises in the full terror of his Satanic dictatorship. We are not looking for the coming of antichrist, but for the coming of Christ. On the other hand, the beast may possibly be recognized as such before he comes into full power; his rise may be rather gradual so that his preliminary maneuvers may serve to identify the time of the end. Certainly the conditions and systems which will produce the world dictatorship will prevail for some time previous to the rapture. Many careful students of prophecy and of world events seem to see in present-day trends the heading up of world affairs in preparation for the beast.

The spirit of antichrist was already in the world in John's day stirring up the Roman emperors against the infant Christian Church. The same spirit of Satan has continued to work through the centuries in opposition to Christ's holy cause. When the Church will have been raptured, then will the antichrist appear in his full power and authority, as Satan incarnate, seeking to deceive the whole world. It is a tragic fact that many who now resist the Spirit of Christ, will some day fall an easy prey to the spirit of antichrist.

What the Bible Says About Antichrist

Revelation 13:1-5

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What must happen before antichrist appears?

Verse 1 — *"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."*

John sees here the rise of the antichrist from out of the turbulence of the restless nations. Here is Satan in incarnate manifestation; the devil with a human body. Ever since Satan's ejection from heaven, it has been his maniacal desire to strike at God through His creatures. The book of Job reveals this intent quite clearly. By means of evil spirits, Satan has been busy through the ages, trying to divert men from the way of God, and thereby to cause their destruction. However, Satan himself has never been able to be visibly present among men. At the last hour, he will attempt, in his last desperate move to imitate the incarnation of Christ by every form of trickery and deceit. By means of this greater-than-human power, the beast will usurp the political power over a world federation of nations, and by means of his political supremacy, he will attempt to deceive and destroy the inhabitants of the earth.

Verse 2 — *"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him*

his power, and his seat, and great authority."

The beast combines the various characteristics of the first three of Daniel's beasts. (See Daniel 7:4-7.) The beast will have the advantage of the experience of all the great dictators of history through the power and wisdom of the dragon who gives him his supremacy. This world civilization, prevailed by evil, slew the Son of God and has continued to crucify Him afresh through the centuries. The world, the flesh, and the devil have always been inseparable companions. It is not at all strange that the world society we call civilization will at last enthrone Satan.

Verses 3 & 4 — *"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"*

The language of verse three describes the attempt of Satan to imitate the resurrection of Christ. The beast either will be a former great dictator brought back from death in full Satanic power or he will be wounded and resurrected after he arises in the end time. At any rate, his surprising survival will cause the whole world to wonder after him and to worship the dragon (Satan) who will give him his power, might and cleverness. Obviously the beast will be so extraordinary as a ruler and dictator that he will be revered and admired as the greatest political champion of all history. So great will be the organization of the beast's forces that no one will dare to declare war on him, though he subjugates nation after nation.

Verses 5 & 6 — *"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."*

The beast will apparently be a great orator winning the admiration of many by his convincing speeches which will be blasphemous in their defiance of God and religion. He will make atheists and devil worshippers out of many. For three and one-half years (42 months) his voice will dominate the radio waves as well as the halls of government, and he will be the most persistent preacher of Satan's lies ever to exist.

Verses 7 & 8 — *"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world."*

Inasmuch as the Church will already have been taken up in the rapture, the identity of the saints mentioned in these verses presents a problem. They are either Jews who have turned wholeheartedly to God, or they are Gentile believers who will have awakened to the truth of the gospel after the rapture. Both classes of saints

appear in the apocalypse. In chapter 7, a group of tribulation saints is described which comes out of great tribulation; a group composed of saints from every nation, who have been martyred by the beast. The seventh chapter also portrays a sealing of the Jews (144,000) from all the tribes of Israel. No doubt the wrath of the beast will be hurled at believers of both classes. The wars of the beast will be fought against all nations where any Christian influence exists. He will finally convince or subdue all except those whose names are written in the book of life.

Verses 9 & 10 — *"If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."*

Here is a word added to encourage the believer. He who kills, persecutes, and destroys with the sword, will at last, himself be destroyed by the sword. The beast will rule for a season in hatred and violence, but at last One will come who will destroy him with the sword of His mouth (Revelation 19).

Verses 11-13 — *"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."*

Here is the completion of the Satanic trinity: the dragon, the beast and lamb-like beast. The first beast will be a political dictator; the second beast will be a religious dictator. The first will organize the nations and the armies; the second will organize the apostate religions and make them subservient to the designs of the political dictator. Inasmuch as man is incurably religious, the beast will exploit his religious capacities, providing a false but spectacular religion backed by the miraculous.

Verses 14 & 15 — *"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."*

As all false religion is idolatrous, the beast's cult will have as its center an image of the first beast. The image will be the more revered because it will be erected by the people as a religious project. When the image is erected it will be given miraculous powers of speech, and the ability to cause death to all who refuse to bow the knee in worship of Satan. Here will be superstition in its culminating stage. Let all men who are now careless of the gospel take heed. He who now rejects the truth of God may soon be the victim of the most demonic delusion. If men will not receive the truth God will give

them over to believe a lie, the worst lie of all time. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.)

The Names and Character of Antichrist

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Where do we read about the beast? Who gives the beast power?

The term "antichrist" is found only in the epistles of John; however it is the term most frequently used by Bible teachers to refer to the "man of sin" who will prevail for a season just before our Lord comes again to reign. This final dictator of the Gentile nations, who will be an incarnation of Satan, is called by various names, such as: antichrist (1 John 2:18), the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15, Daniel 12:11), the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7), that wicked one (2 Thessalonians 2:8), the beast (Revelation 13:1), etc.

Perhaps the best way to get a complete picture of the antichrist is to study carefully all the names and titles by which he is known.

The Antichrist

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22). "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7). "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3).

This name is used only by John in his epistles. (See 1 John 2:18, 22; John 4:3; 2 John 7.) This is the term most frequently used by prophetic teachers and writers to refer to the last world dictator of Gentile powers. The use of the word in the original Greek without the definite article shows that it had come to be a proper name. It was a common understanding of the early Church that a universally powerful false Christ would appear before the coming of Christ. Bishop Westcott says the following about John's use of the word antichrist: "It seems to be most consonant to the context to hold that 'antichrist' here describes one who assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ." The prefix "anti" may mean "instead of" or "opposed to." The use of the prefix in the word "antichrist" seems to suggest that the Satanic incarnation will be an imitation of Christ's incarnation as well as a violent gesture of antagonism of the Spirit of Christ. The antichrist will pretend to be a Messiah while, at the same time, he opposes every thing for which

Christ stands. He will be a devil in Christ's garments. He will gain his supremacy riding a white horse. (See Revelation 6:1,2.) The divine incarnation was God's master move in order to redeem and win the lost. Satan's incarnation will be his master stroke of blasphemy, when, by imitation, he will seek to caricature that which is most precious to the heart of God.

John clearly affirms that the spirit of antichrist is already working in the world. His influence is seen in the widespread denial of the deity of Christ. (See 1 John 2:22,23.) We do not wish to be uncharitable, but we must affirm what John by inspiration affirms, that all who deny that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Christ (the Messiah) are pervaded with the spirit of antichrist. It is a master trick of Satan to get theologians to extol the life and teachings of Jesus, while denying that He was who He claimed to be — the Son of God. God has revealed His Son as the mediator of our salvation; it is the lie of antichrist to persuade men that they have salvation in themselves, by their own works.

1 John 2:19, shows that one of the devices of the antichrist, in his present operation, is that of infiltrating the churches with unconverted persons who cause strife and divisions, and thereby lower the prestige of the Church. It is no wonder that it is so easy to turn many churches modernistic, for they are, in many instances, largely infiltrated with unsaved people. In the end time the large church institutions will be so largely dominated by worldly persons, even to the high positions, that antichrist will be able to take them over and exploit them for his own purposes.

Another aim of antichrist is that of bringing about the denial of the humanity of Christ. (See 1 John 4:3.) If he cannot make men deny Christ's deity, he will influence them to deny His humanity. W. E. Blackstone, author of "Jesus Is Coming," has the following to say about the antichrist: "This name introduces to us one of the most solemn and foreboding subjects in the Word of God. An antichrist — one absolutely opposed to Jesus Christ — we are told, shall come. The spirit of antichrist is already in the world, denying the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, either in the past or in the future." (See 2 John 7.) Modernism denies the deity of Christ, while Christian Science denies His humanity. It is difficult to say which is more antichristian. If Christ is not divine, His death for us avails nothing: if He is not truly human, then He had no real body and His death was only an illusion. He was both God and man uniting both parties by means of His vicarious death. Belonging to both heaven and earth, He could reconcile heaven and earth.

The Abomination of Desolation

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . ." (Matthew 24:15). "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not . . ." (Mark 13:14).

This term is used by both Matthew (24:15) and Mark (13:14), and is said to be taken from the prophecies of Daniel. (See 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.) This term may not refer

to the person of the antichrist, but rather to the antichrist's act of desecrating the temple and the holy altar. Some of Daniel's prophecies had a double reference to both the antichrist of the last days and to an evil Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the holy place in Jerusalem by offering pagan sacrifices on the altar.

Antichrist, like Antiochus Epiphanes, will have no regard for holy things. He will be a blasphemer of indescribable perversity. His whole aim will be that of slandering the name of the Lord and of degrading that which is sacred. He will suppress the worship of Jehovah God, replacing it with the worship of Satan. He will not be irreligious, but the high priest of a religion of Satanic origin.

Christ's prophecy in Matthew and Mark may also have a double reference. It may refer first to the desecration of the temple in A.D. 70 when the Roman banners were hoisted above the sanctuary, but it quite certainly refers also to the final desolation of the Jewish worship during the tribulation period.

The Man of Sin

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Paul introduces this title in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The antichrist will be a man more completely given to sin than any other in history, so that he may be called the "man of sin." He is thereby the more closely identified with Satan who is the author and originator of sin. The Greek word for "sin" means "to miss the mark," or to come short of obedience and submission to God. The aim of antichrist is to make men come short of full obedience to the Lord.

The Son of Perdition

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Christ is the Son of God: antichrist will be the son of perdition. Christ came from God and from heaven; antichrist will come from Satan and from perdition. As the son of perdition, he comes out of perdition, and is destined for perdition, while his object is to drag others into perdition, in order that they may be lost to God. Judas Iscariot is also called the son of perdition (John 17:12), but this does not mean that the "man of sin" will be Judas, reincarnate. Judas was motivated by the spirit of antichrist, and thereby was a type of antichrist. The "son of perdition" will certainly betray Christ in every way he can, but he will never confess having betrayed innocent blood, nor will he kill himself in vain regret of his deeds. Judas was called the son of perdition because of his spirit which was that of Satan. The antichrist will be the "son of perdition" as no one has ever been.

The Mystery of Iniquity

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he

who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

This term, used by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, may refer to the antichrist or the spirit of lawlessness of which antichrist is the embodiment. Mystery means that which is of such character as to be known only by revelation. Christ's incarnation in 1 Timothy 3:16 is called the mystery of godliness, because it can be fully understood only by revelation. Only by revelation can we know that Satan will at last for a season be embodied in a satanic incarnation — the epitome of all evil. This mystery of iniquity is said to be already at work hindering the cause of God, but at the same time being hindered by the Holy Spirit from carrying the satanic program to its full manifestation. Only after the Church will have been raptured and the Holy Spirit withdrawn will the mystery of iniquity be able to break out of restraint into a worldwide diabolical dictatorship.

The Lawless One

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

There can be no doubt whatever of this fact that the "Wicked" here referred to is a person. The word is masculine gender and is declared to be one who will be destroyed personally by Christ at His final appearing. "That Wicked" means literally, "the lawless one," or one who defies every law of God. Here is the head of all rebellion, in person. When antichrist and Christ come face to face, decisive will be the defeat and destruction of the despicable imitator.

The Beast of the Sea

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1).

Under this figure, the antichrist is seen to be a political dictator ruling the nations in absolute power. The destiny of a corrupt civilization is that of being ruled by Satan incarnate. The figure of the "beast" is taken from Daniel's (Daniel 7) vision of the march of world empires, and definitely portrays the antichrist's sway over real nations. For a season his political power is absolute. He will have full military precedence so that no army dare attack him. He will have absolute economic control, for no one may buy or sell without his license. He will, further, by the aid of a second beast, have full control of all religion. The beast will rule over all the nations that Satan promised to Christ on the mount of temptation in exchange for our Lord's submission; but at last, He, to whom the kingdoms truly belong, will come with the title deed, and with the sword of His mouth will utterly defeat the antichrist. When Satan's government runs its course, then He will reign from pole to pole and shore to shore whose name shall be called *Wonderful*.

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Instruct class members to list the seven names of antichrist, where they are found in the Bible, and what they mean in relation to his character.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND THE ANTICHRIST

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. How will the tribulation compare with other times of trouble in history? _____

2. Why is the tribulation called Jacob's trouble? _____

3. When will the seals be opened? Who is the rider of the white horse? What does the red horse represent? What does the black horse represent? What is the name of the rider of the pale horse? _____

4. Where do we find the word "antichrist" in the Bible? _____

5. What must happen before antichrist appears? _____

6. Where do we read about the beast? Who gives the beast power? _____

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND THE DESTINY OF SINNERS

AIM: To gain an understanding of the following from the Declaration of Faith: "We believe that the dead both small and great shall be raised up and stand with the living before the judgment seat of God; and that then a solemn and awful separation shall take place wherein the wicked shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment and the righteous to life eternal; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of man in Heaven or in hell on principles of righteousness as set forth in His Holy Word." (Aimee Semple McPherson)

KEY VERSES:

"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; . . . In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Romans 2:12,16).

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:41,46).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Listed below are the various judgments found in the Word of God. Read each Scripture reference, then draw a line from the reference to the judgment it refers to.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. John 5:24 | The Judgment of the Antichrist |
| 2. 2 Corinthians 5:10 | The Judgment of the Unsaved |
| 3. Jeremiah 30:7 | The Judgment at the Cross |
| 4. Revelation 17:1-19:5 | The Judgment of the Believer |
| 5. Revelation 19:19-21 | The Judgment of the Nations |
| 6. Matthew 25:31-46 | The Judgment of Israel |
| 7. Revelation 20:1-3,10 | The Judgment of Babylon |
| 8. Revelation 20:11-15 | The Judgment of Satan |

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Does anything escape from judgment?

Judgment is inescapable; it is inevitable. All things are judged. There is not a person or thing that can escape judgment. We are constantly judging everything and everybody around us, and we at the same time are being judged by others. All that we do and create must pass someone's judgment. Time itself is judging all things and making that which is perishable apparent.

There is no type of society capable of dispensing with courts of judgment. The acts of men that are antisocial and illegal are pronounced unworthy of good citizenship and are punished in accordance with their harm to the community. Even here upon earth, some acts are judged deserving of life imprisonment or death, because some men are beyond correction or unwilling to conduct themselves in accordance with the best interests of a peaceful society. Should we then consider it a strange matter or an injustice that God should call all men into judgment? Do we, in this life, escape the punishment of the law if we are lawless? Do we receive rewards and benefits unless we are in some manner judged worthy of reward? Can we make progress upward in modern life without satisfying the scrutiny of our fellows? If God is a just judge, must He not judge righteous and impartial judgment? The final judgments

of God are, in fact, the only truly righteous appraisals, because only He knows all men perfectly.

Now the fact that God is all knowing makes His judgments inevitable. Knowledge requires judgment. If a rational creature knows anything to be good, he must pronounce it good, or if evil, pronounce it evil. If he does otherwise he deceives himself. The ideas of good and evil are inherent in all reason. We cannot reason about anything without adjudging it to be good or bad. If a thing is bad, that is useless, harmful, perverted, or unharmonious, it ought to be destroyed. If a thing is good, useful, harmonious, beneficial, it ought to be preserved. Human beings are in possession of eternal souls; they have endless existence. All beings are to God, good or evil in their relationship to God's Son and His eternal plan and are therefore either to be fitted into God's plan, or to be cast in their ruined state into discard. It is the privilege of all men now, while Christ's redemptive grace is available, to be made fit for eternal reward. God takes no pleasure in the death of the ungodly, but if men persist in their ungodliness, the great Judge has no other alternative but to pronounce them to be what they are, and to consign them to an existence fitting their character and their attitude.

We may be absolutely certain that there will be a final judgment of all men. There is a common notion held by many who are unacquainted with or indifferent to the Scriptures to the effect that the judgment consists merely of the events and circumstances of human experience and history. Persons who hold this theory believe that all punishment and reward come to one in the course of his life, in his successes and failures, in his pleasure and pain, in his "ups" and "downs," in his joys and sufferings.

Such a theory as that described above is unacceptable for several reasons. In the first place, it is contrary to scriptural teaching. Although man is, indeed, sometimes punished during the present life by adversity and blessed by good fortune, the Bible clearly sets forth the fact of a final judgment in which exact justice will be done. Lazarus and the rich man were not equitably judged by their earthly circumstances. Only God's disposition of mankind after death can mete out to all his just desert. In this present life, the godly often suffer and are lowly esteemed, while the less worthy often prosper and bask in the bright spotlight of fame. Life is too short in a perverse world for the exact and equitable distribution of justice. If we did not look forward to a future judgment, we could only with great difficulty maintain confidence in the impartiality of God. Earthly circumstances do not constitute God's last word. Human history alone would present a very warped picture of divine justice. The downtrodden and despised of earth await a fairer basis. When the martyrs cried out for the vindication of their righteous cause and the avenging of their blood, they were asked to wait a "little while." Someone has said that "God does not pay every Saturday night, but His paydays are certain nevertheless." God's great payday is yet to come and cannot be escaped. Strong says, "The crime that is triumphant here, and the goodness that is here maligned and oppressed, must be brought to light and

fitly recompensed." However much man may receive his just desert in this world, it does not make less certain the final judgment; for if the Scriptures teach anything they teach the certainty of a future day of judgment. Paul writes to the Romans, "*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Romans 14:10-12).

Some have, moreover, held the final judgment to be unnecessary for the reason that men's final destiny is settled already before death by their acceptance or rejection of the gospel. These reason that no future tribunal need pass upon the destiny of either the righteous or the ungodly inasmuch as their present attitude reveals them to be what they are. These, however, fail to understand the purpose of the final appraisal. Berkhof writes, "God clearly teaches in His Word that there will be a final judgment, and that settles the matter for all those who recognize the Bible as the final standard of faith." Moreover, the underlying assumption on which the argument proceeds, namely, that the final judgment is for the purpose of the future state of man, is entirely erroneous. It will serve the purpose rather of displaying before all rational creatures, the declarative glory of God in a formal, forensic act, which magnifies on the one hand His holiness and righteousness, and on the other hand, His grace and mercy. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the judgment at the last day will differ from that at the death of each individual in more than one respect. It will not be secret, but public; it will not pertain to the soul only, but also to the body; it will not have reference to a single individual, but to all men. Luke writes concerning Paul, "*And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled*" (Acts 24:25).

What the Bible Says About the Final Judgment

Acts 17:31

"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

God is making ready for great things in the age to come. Something is scheduled for the new heavens and the new earth, the magnificence of which we can now little appreciate, in which the redeemed of earth will participate. We can only speculate as to the nature of the Lord's future program, but of one thing we are certain, that here on earth God is preparing a people for His name's sake that shall be eternally to His glory before principalities and powers in the heavens. Christ Jesus, God's Son, will be the center of the Father's program and all human beings who inhabit heaven will be joint-heirs with Christ of the glories that attend the divine program. Only we who are Christ's will rule and reign with Him and find a creative place in His program. In the coming days of judgment, it will be

Death and judgment are appointments that all men have with God. This life is the dressing room for eternity; let us put on the robes of righteousness; let us put on Christ. Only the Savior's own spotless robe will bring to us the Lord's approval. Let no man forget in his race for earth's prizes that he has an appointment with God.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Hebrews 9:27

Paul's gospel was the good news of Christ's redeeming work made available to all on the basis of active faith in Christ along with the believer's identification of himself with the Lord in His death, burial and resurrection. As far as we know, only this gospel can redeem and save from judgment. If the Lord has any special leniency for the heathen who have never heard the gospel, it has not been revealed in the Word. Our obligation to the world is to preach the gospel without which men perish in sin.

The Jews and such as came under the law of Moses will be judged according to that law. It will be the standard of their judgment. Every violation of the law will add to their guiltiness before God. They were not ignorant of the right and wrong, for it was categorized for them in a specific code. However, those who knew not the law will not escape judgment. God has written a certain law of right and wrong upon men's hearts. There are no people anywhere who do not have some code of righteousness. Any people with a word in their language for "I should" and "I should not" have a standard by which to be judged. All men have sinned and are guilty by any standard of righteousness that can be conceived. No man anywhere has always done what his conscience told him he "ought" to do. Not all men will be punished with equal severity, but as far as we know there is no salvation, as it is conceived in the gospel, that men can obtain without faith in Jesus Christ.

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; . . . In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

Romans 2:12,16

determined who will enter into the celestial realm and in what capacity. The day has been appointed for the pronouncement of God's approval or disapproval and none can escape His scrutiny. Now, God's judgment will be righteous judgment. The courtroom of heaven will be flooded with the pure white light of truth and all will have to recognize the justice of every verdict. God has appointed a day and He has also appointed a Judge. He who is now the world's Savior and Redeemer will, in the appointed hour of judgment, be the world's Appraiser. All must know Him either as their Savior or their Judge. Inasmuch as men's salvation hinges upon their acceptance of Christ, He will decide their fate. We will confess Him here as personal Lord, or then be obligated to recognize Him as Lord of every sphere. (See Philippians 2:10,11.)

This is the judgment of all the unsaved, great and small. None of the saved appear at this tribunal; the believers will all be judged for the merit of their works at the coming of Christ. The first books are said by some to represent the books of the Bible, but it is more likely that they represent the record books of God's memory of all men's deeds. The other book called the "book of life" is the book in which are recorded the names of all the redeemed; all these at the white throne judgment are cast into the lake of fire because their names are not in the "book of life." Only during this life are names written in the Lamb's "book of life." Seiss has the following to say about Revelation 20:12: "Heaven keeps record of all the deeds of men, and of all the thoughts and feelings under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing: but the lives they lived, the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and tempers they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books of eternity. Yes, O man, O woman, whoever you may be, your biography is written! An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a fittiness of speech, or a base feeling that

**What are the books out of which men will be judged?*

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

*NOTE to instructor:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Revelation 20:12

Not only must all sinners come into judgment, but even the believers' lives must be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. This is not the great white throne judgment, but the judgment seat of our Lord where we shall appear at His coming. At this judgment no one is condemned to destruction, but everyone's works which he has done will be made manifest and he will be rewarded in accordance with his practices. Though we have escaped the condemnation of the law, we are not immune from the scrutiny of Christ. Our works must yet stand the test before we can be rewarded. Let no one suppose that he may live indifferently, presuming upon the grace of God. Our works will be revealed and appraised as good or bad.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

2 Corinthians 5:10

ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold hand by its true name, and set down to your account, to be then brought forth for final settlement, if not clean blotted out through faith in Christ's blood before this present life of yours is ended. And if no other books are to be thought of, the book of your own conscience and the book of God's remembrance, will then and there attest your every misdeed and ill-desert. Think ye that fear not God, and make nothing of trampling His laws, how your case will stand when those books are opened!"

— Apocalypse-page 479.

John 5:24

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life."

The great white throne judgment is for sinners only. The believer will never be judged for the sins of his past life, for they are blotted out by the blood of Jesus. The believer's judgment for sin takes place at the cross. The Christian will appear at the judgment seat of Christ at His coming, but not to be judged as to his salvation, but as to the merit of his works, whether they are worthy of special reward.

1 Corinthians 11:31,32

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

When a truly born again person disobeys, he is judged by trials and chastening here. If, however, we would judge and confess our faults, we would escape many chastenings, for there is One who is faithful and just to forgive transgressions when they are confessed.

It is the love of God which prompts Him to chasten us here. He does not want the believer to become apostate and to be judged with the sinners, so the Lord applies the rod of affliction to keep him in line with the divine will. We ought to praise God for His chastening of us, for in this manner are we kept pure. It is better to be judged for transgression here than to be judged at the great white throne.

The Various Judgments

At the Cross — John 5:24

In a very real sense the cross is a judgment for the believer. At the cross we judge ourselves to be sinners and as a result we pass from judgment. He who confesses his sins at Calvary and is born anew through saving faith will never again be judged for those past sins; they are absolutely blotted out and forgotten. *"Who dares accuse us now? The Judge Himself has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for Us!"* (Romans 8:33,34 —Phillips Translation, Page 19). *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). How much better it is to confess our sins before the merciful Saviour of the cross than to be obliged to confess them before the great Judge when the day of mercy shall have passed.

That of the Believer — 2 Corinthians 5:10

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*When will believers be judged? In respect to what will Christians be judged?*

The judgment of believers takes place at the coming of Christ at which time He will sit on His judgment seat to reward His people according to their works. All believers will be ushered into life eternal, but not all will receive the same degree of honor. The works of some believers will be richly rewarded in royal privileges, the works of others will be burned as "hay, wood, and stubble." The true believer will not enter into condemnatory judgment for past sins which are under the blood, but he will in some way answer for idle words and unchristian works. Berkhof has the following to say regarding the judgment of the believer, "When Jesus says in John 5:24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life,' He clearly means, in view of the context, that the believer cometh not into condemnatory judgment. But it is sometimes objected that the sins of believers, which are pardoned, certainly will not be published at that time; but Scripture leads us to expect that they will be, though they will, of course, be revealed as pardoned sins. Men will be judged for every idle word, Matthew 12:36; and for every secret thing, Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5, and there is no indication whatsoever that this will be limited to the wicked" (Systematic Theology, Page 732). Such Scripture passage as Matthew 25:14-23; 34-40,46; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5, 3:11-15, clearly affirm that there will be a judgment of the righteous in order to appraise their works. In that day it will be known how we have increased our talents and whether our works are silver and gold and precious stones, or whether they are hay, wood, and stubble.

That of Israel — Jeremiah 30:7

God will again bring the scattered of Israel out of every nation in order to complete His plan for them as set forth in Daniel's vision of the Seventy Weeks. (See Jeremiah 30:7.) Not all Israelites will qualify for God's new dispensation of mercy. The Great Tribulation will serve as a judgment of God's ancient people. It is the day of Jacob's trouble. The twelfth chapter of Revelation portrays the trying of Israel and chapter seven reveals that only a remnant of Israel who have the seal of God will be preserved. The fires of tribulation will separate the worthy from the unworthy among the Israelites and

judgment of all the unsaved. There are no righteous at this judgment for the saved have risen at the first resurrection to reign with Christ. After the millennium the second resurrection will take place which will be a resurrection of the ungodly dead (Revelation 20:5,6,13). (The godly have already been judged at Christ's coming.) The sinful dead will be judged out of the basis recorded in the record book of men's deeds on the basis of the gospel of Christ. A second book known as the "book of life," a book containing the names of the redeemed, will be used as a final basis of their condemnation. The wickedness of men's deeds will determine the degree of their punishment, but the fact that their names are not found in the Lamb's "book of life" is sufficient to condemn them to outer darkness and eternal separation from God and heaven (John 3:18). No matter how self-righteous anyone may be, he cannot have part in the first resurrection unless he is saved by grace and unless his name is in the "book of life."

THE DESTINATION OF THE SINNER — HELL

"We believe that hell is a place of outer darkness and deepest sorrow, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched; a place prepared for the devil and his angels where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, a place of grief and eternal regret on the part of them who have rejected the mercy, love and tenderness of the crucified Savior, choosing death, rather than life; and that there into a lake that burns with fire and brimstone shall be cast the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars, and they who have rejected and spurned the love and sacrifice of a bleeding Redeemer, passing the cross to their doom, in spite of every entreaty and warning of the Holy Spirit." (The Declaration of Faith —Almee Sempie McPherson)

Eternal punishment is not a pleasant subject for discussion, and it is not for relish of the topic that we present it. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked nor do Christian believers. Yet eternal perdition is a fact clearly declared in the Word of God. If we are to preach and teach the Word faithfully, we must not omit some of the facts. Let no one, of course, preach on hell in a light or contemptuous manner, but let those who love men warn them by all means of the danger of perdition.

Now, the fact is, that preaching and warning of eternal torment is a merciful thing, because if hell exists (and God's Word declares that it definitely does exist), then men ought to be warned of its danger. To know that hell awaits the impenitent and to keep silent on the matter would be an injustice to mankind. Is not the drugist careful to label what is poison with a skull and crossbones? Does not the highway department block the road with warning signs when a bridge is out? What would happen to the motorists if someone took down all the warning signs so as to make the highways more appealing to people of artistic temperament? It is not only proper that we warn of eternal punishment; it is an

determine which will constitute the Israel of the millennial age. (See Ezekiel 20:33-38.)

That of Babylon — Revelation 17:1-19:5

As Christ has His bride, so will Satan have his, as is clearly recorded in Revelation 17:1-19:5. Satan's bride will manifest herself in a great religious system, a confederation of false churches and cults, whose aim it will be to deceive men and to pervert their basic religious inclination. Satan's bride will deceive with great success for a time, but she will at last come into judgment (Revelation 18:1-3). Thiessen writes about her judgment as follows: "Under the figure of a woman, the Revelation pictures for us a federated ecclesiastical system. It represents the outcome of all movements for church union that leave Christ and His truth out of consideration. We have here the development that will be reached during the tribulation. At first the woman rides the beast. This shows that the ecclesiastical system will for a time dominate the political system. . . But her prosperity will be short. In one day the Lord God will judge and completely destroy her. . . Her judgment takes place before the Lord's return to earth (cf. Revelation 19:1-4; 11-21), and her judgment is an eternal punishment (Revelation 19:1-3)." — Lectures in Systematic Theology, Page 499.

That of the Antichrist — Revelation 19:19-21

This judgment is described in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, and Revelation 19:19-21. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).

That of the Nations — Matthew 25:31-46

This event is portrayed in Matthew 25:31-46. This is not the same judgment as that of the great white throne which takes place after the millennium. (See Revelation 20:11-15.) This event is a judgment of the nations, not of individuals as in Revelation 20:11-15. It seems that the nations are judged on the basis of their treatment of Israel, and with the aim of discerning which nations may exist as such during the millennial kingdom. (See Joel 3:11-17.) All will be judged individually at the great white throne.

That of Satan — Revelation 20:1-3,10

Satan will be judged, in a sense, and bound at the coming of Christ, at which time also he will be imprisoned in the pit for a thousand years. (See Revelation 20:1-3.) After the thousand years Satan will be loosed briefly, when he will tempt the nations and provoke a rebellion. During his uprising, fire from heaven will devour his followers, after which he will be cast into the lake of fire where his trinity of deceivers will be eternally tormented (Revelation 20:7-10).

That of the Unsaved — Revelation 20:11-15

This is the judgment of the great white throne, the final

obligation with which we are charged; it is our debt to the unconverted.

Fundamentalists often have been accused of being too zealous in their defense of the doctrine of the everlasting punishment of sinners. It may be possible that we have made our defense in the wrong spirit in some cases, but it is difficult to be patient with those who discard divine revelation in favor of human theories, especially when such theories lead to disregard for the sacrificial work of Christ. If man in his sinful state was not eternally lost, then Christ died in vain. The doctrine of eternal perdition is a historic doctrine which has been accepted by the main body of the Church since the beginning. Christian apologists (defenders) support the doctrine, not because of any delight in the idea of an endless hell, but because it is plainly taught in the Scripture. We defend the doctrine of "hell" as we would defend any other Bible doctrine. If the Bible is in error regarding the future life, it may easily be in error on any or all other matters.

The thought of an eternal hell is a fearful idea, but it is obviously more than an idea; it is a fearful reality. The state of being lost is an awful state; it is a tragic fate from which God sent His Son to save us. Does it seem reasonable that God would have sent His only begotten Son to die the frightful death of the cross unless man's lost state had been something extremely terrible? If the fate of the sinful had been merely the cessation of existence or a mild punishment out of which he could eventually work his way, the death of the infinite Son of God on a Roman cross would have been and was needless tragedy. But Christ did die because His death was a necessarily extreme measure to rescue sinful man from an extremely fearful destiny.

What the Bible Says About Hell

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Does eternal destruction mean cessation of existence?

Flaming destruction is here said to be the fate of two classes of sinners or those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel. These who do not know God are not necessarily persons who are completely ignorant of religious matters; they may be persons who have heard and read much about God, but who neglect to know Him through Christ by faith. Knowing about God and knowing Him personally are different things. To continue in sin is an act of disobedience and rebellion

against God. The blessings of eternal life can be bestowed only upon those who know God and upon those who obey God. Everything in heaven is related to God and emanates from God. If one refuses to know God, he, by his own decision and choice, shuts himself off from God and all blessings which come only from God. The only thing left for one who chooses rebellion is isolation from God and all blessing. Hell was made as a prison for Satan and his angels, but there is no other place for those who follow Satan rather than God.

The destruction referred to in verse nine does not mean cessation of existence nor annihilation. Destruction means ruin. Everlasting destruction means to render worthless forever. It means eternal separation from God and all blessing. Only the redeemed serve a useful purpose in eternity; the condemned are forever ruined by sin and conscious of their tragic ruin. God has a remedy in this life for the ruin of sin, but it must be appropriated by faith and love. If one cannot choose life and redemption in this life instead of sin and ruin, then he will serve no purpose in heaven. God can give eternal life only to those who voluntarily choose God. The final judgment only confirms eternally our choices of life. Today is the day of salvation.

Matthew 25:41,46

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method.

★What does Matthew 25:46 say about the duration of the sinner's punishment?

There are, of course, degrees of reward and punishment, but, as far as the final judgment is concerned, there are only two categories, those on the right hand and those on the left hand. We determine our own category by our attitude toward the redemptive work of Christ and His offer of salvation.

Those who align themselves on the left hand are sent away into eternal fire; fire prepared for the devil. Again we repeat that God prepared hell, not for man, but for Satan. However, if man is determined to follow Satan and to refuse every divine plan of salvation, he must share Satan's fate. Let not him who deliberately spurns God's offer of redemption accuse the divine of unjustly severe punishment. Anyone who loathes God's program and God's people in this world would certainly feel out of place in heaven and he would, indeed, be out of place. Sin and holiness do not mix. All men will be sent to their own places where they belong. But we can now choose where we belong.

Let us notice in verse 46 that the punishment of the wicked as well as the life of the righteous is eternal. The same word is used to describe the duration of the existence of both classes. If the life of the redeemed is everlasting, then the punishment of the wicked is likewise everlasting. If the punishment of the wicked is only for a brief season, then we cannot be sure that the life of the saved endures for more than a brief season. Logic dictates that both are equal.

Hebrews 10:26,27

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

There is no future hope for the person who persists in sin. Christ died once and for all for sin. God has no other Son to offer, nor is there any other provision. If one despises the sacrifice of Calvary, he has eliminated his sole avenue of hope. There will certainly be no second chance after death. If one dies in unbelief, his outlook is only a fearful expectation of fiery judgment.

Luke 16:22-28

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.' Then he said, 'I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment'."

It is clear from the particulars of this story that one goes immediately after death to a place of conscious blessing or conscious torment. The place of blessing where the departed believers await the resurrection is called Paradise. The place where the wicked await the judgment is called Hades. Hades is not the final hell (which is the lake of fire), but it is a place of conscious torment, as is shown from the words of the rich man. Some have contended that this story is a parable, but it is not so called. Even if it were a parable it would not be less true to the facts. Jesus did not teach by parables that which is untrue.

The rich man was in torment, in fiery suffering. While he laments his estate, he does not complain of unjust treatment.

A part of the remorse of the condemned was caused by his memory of past sins. Evidently one's memory will be

active in hell. The things that men would like most to forget will be alive in the memory forever.

It is clearly stated here that a great gulf separates Hades from Paradise so that no one may pass from torment to heaven. There is no second chance of approbation. The idea of a purgatory or of the reformatory effect of hell's fire is unscriptural. Death fixes eternally the fate of man.

If the inhabitants of Hades could speak to us they would preach eloquently of the folly of sin and of the reality of hell. They would not soft pedal the truth, nor apologize for fervent warnings. Now is the time to warn men of the danger of Hades. When they are in torment with Dives, there will be no further opportunity for redemption.

Revelation 20:1-15

Before studying chapter 20 let us go back briefly to chapter 19, verse 20. It will be noted that the first inhabitants of the lake of fire are the beast and false prophet of Revelation 13, who are consigned to it at the time of the Lord's coming with His saints.

No one is now in the lake of fire. The wicked who die before the end of the millennium go to Hades, which is an intermediate state of torment, where they await the final judgment. While the righteous are resurrected at the time of Christ's appearing, the unsaved dead are not raised up until after the thousand years.

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Where is Satan chained for the thousand years? When will Satan be released?

●Verses 1-3 — *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."*

Immediately after the incarceration of the beast and the false prophet (antichrist), the old dragon, who is Satan himself, is cast into the bottomless pit or abyss.

The abyss is not the same as the lake of fire, for the devil is not cast into the lake of fire until after his rebellion at the close of the millennium. The abyss is the lowest region of Hades. Satan is imprisoned in the same region where the dead now are, but in the lowest compartment.

The reason why he is imprisoned in the pit is in order that the ideal kingdom of righteousness may be established. As long as Satan is free to tempt, deceive, allure, delude, and corrupt mankind, there can be no peace or justice on the earth. All human efforts to realize ideal conditions

are doomed to failure. Only when Christ personally comes to earth and orders the incarceration of Satan will a kingdom of peace and righteousness be realized.

In fact, the only possible way the constant failures, wars, and disorders of history can be logically explained is by first assuming the existence of a superhuman power of evil. This present world is a proving ground of immortal souls in which God's people are being chosen and prepared for eternity. For this reason God permits Satan to have a limited liberty to tempt. When the Lord is ready to set up His kingdom of justice, Satan will be imprisoned where he cannot disrupt, deceive, nor corrupt.

•Verse 5 — *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."*

The wicked dead await the judgment in Hades, but the righteous dead are resurrected before the millennium and they reign with Christ for the thousand years. This verse explains what happened to the followers of the beast and false prophet who are said to be slain in Revelation 19:21. They do not follow the beast into the lake of fire but are consigned to Hades, which is the intermediate state of suffering where the rich man of Luke 16 was. That death does not mean cessation of existence is shown from the fact that the wicked dead live again after the thousand years. The fires of Hades do not annihilate its occupants.

•Verse 6 — *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."*

The righteous die only once. Their death is physical only and, in a spiritual sense, is a blessing. On the other hand, the wicked die twice. They die the first death when they depart from this earth, which death is a curse both physically and spiritually because they go to Hades, a place of torment for their souls. The first death, however, is not their total fate, for they must experience the second death which is eternal confinement in the lake of fire; the second death is far worse than the first. Blessed are the followers of Christ, for they never will taste the second death.

•Verse 7 — *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."*

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What is the result of Satan's final rebellion?*

At the close of the millennium, Satan will be permitted one more opportunity to test the inhabitants. He will not be allowed to tempt those who were already redeemed, however, for they reign with Christ, and inasmuch as they already will have received their glorified bodies they will be beyond temptation. Satan will be able to

delude only some of those who were of the nations and who were born during the thousand years. This is Satan's last convulsive effort to oppose God. It is an act of madness which sums up all the Satanic fury; the devil's gesture. Even an ideal millennial order can be disrupted when Satan is loosed. This is, however, the rebellion to end all rebellions, for Satan's followers are slain by fire from heaven and Satan is cast into the lake of fire from which no one ever escaped. When evil shall have run its entire course and made its full manifestation, God will terminate it forever. When Satan is doomed, evil is ended, for they are inseparable.

•Verse 10 — *"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

Note that the beast and the false prophet have been in the lake of fire for a thousand years, yet they have not been consumed. If the lake of fire brought about annihilation, the beast would have been non-existent long before Satan's entry. Verse 10 further states that they shall be tormented for ever and ever, which expression denies any theory of cessation of existence. If the lake of fire does not annihilate the beast and the antichrist, why should anyone suppose that it will destroy the wicked who are cast into the same place?

•Verses 13-15 — *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

After the millennium, all the wicked dead are raised and judged at the great white throne. This is not a judgment for salvation, but one to determine the extent or intensity of suffering of each according to his works. All the dead are transferred from Hades to the lake of fire along with Satan. The lake of fire was made for Satan and his angels, but those who follow him in defiance of the gospel truth are consigned to the same place, for there is no other prison for the rebellious. The lake of fire will contain all whose names are not written in the "book of life."

The Doctrine of Hell

The Certainty of Hell

To Bible believers, an endless hell for persistent unbelievers is a certainty. The Scriptures hold out no other hope for the impenitent. New Testament writers are unanimous in declaring endless punishment to be the certain fate of all who reject the divine plan of salvation. Jesus said, according to Matthew's gospel, *"It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire"* (Matthew 18:8). Mark records the following: *"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger (held into) of eternal damnation"* (Mark 3:29). Luke pictures the rich man suffer-

ing consciously in an inescapable unmitigated hell. Paul says of the disobedient, "*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction*" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The writer of Hebrews referring to the simple fundamental doctrines of the church said, "*Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*" (Hebrews 6:2). When warning of false teachers, Peter had the following to say, "*These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever*" (2 Peter 2:17). John speaks very positively of the eternal fate of the rebellious when he says, "*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name*" (Revelation 14:11).

There is no reason to believe that the fate of those who serve Satan and reject Christ in this time will be any different from that of those who, during the tribulation, take the mark of the beast.

Every man has an appointment with God, the great judge; an appointment that cannot be evaded. All who are not redeemed through faith in Christ have no other hope than that of being separated from God eternally. This life is the time of man's probation. If he chooses death instead of life, he seals his own destiny. That eternal life is for believers only and that unbelief brings man into eternal judgment are among the clearest and most certain teachings of God's Word.

The Finality of Hell

They are building up a false hope who think that the wicked dead may escape from hell after a brief and cleansing punishment. If one wishes to escape from eternal punishment, now is his opportunity. If anyone will not repent now, what reason is there to expect that he will repent later? If one loves sin more than righteousness, why expect that he will love righteousness more than sin in the future world? At death the character of man is fixed, apparently, for John records the following decree of the Lord, "*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still*" (Revelation 22:11). If a man has the capacity and disposition for fellowship with God, he will certainly be disposed sometime during this life to render to the Lord that fellowship. If one has no mind to obey and serve God, no amount of punishment and suffering in hell will bring out in him a voluntary love for the Lord. God has no delight whatever in service that must be coerced and forced. If within us love does not answer to the love of God, we are eternally lost souls.

The most vivid picture the Bible presents of the condition of the sinner after death represents him to be in conscious torment of fire. It further represents his state as a hopeless one which cannot be escaped nor mitigated. A great gulf is fixed between the wicked and the righteous and none can possibly pass from one place to the other. The rich man described in Luke 16 had, during his indulgent and selfish life, sealed eternally his fate.

There are several points of view that conflict with our belief in the finality of hell:

- Universalism — There is that of the Universalist who believes that all men after proportionate punishment will be saved inasmuch as the atonement atones for all men. We know from the Scripture, however, that the atoning work of Christ effectively atones for the sins of those who believe in Him only. He who believeth not is condemned already. Nowhere in the Scripture is hope held out for the salvation of the unbelieving.

- Restorationist — There is also the viewpoint of the Restorationist who bases his belief on such texts as Acts 3:21; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:19-20. Now such texts refer only to the coming reign and sovereignty of Christ and the removal of the curse; they do not in any way teach the final salvation of the unrepentant. A few verses cannot be interpreted in a manner contradictory to the plain teaching of the whole Bible.

- Second Chance View — In addition there is the theory of a second chance for sinners after death. The Bible nowhere even hints of such a second chance. Abraham said to the rich man in Luke 16:31, "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*" Obviously death in no way changes the character of a man. If anything, he will be ever more rebellious in hell than he was on earth. One's character becomes increasingly less changeable with the passing of time; we are more likely to accept Christ in our youth than we are in the later years of life.

- Annihilationism — There is finally the view of the Annihilationist who believes that all unrepentant sinners will be annihilated; that is, that they will be utterly destroyed and cease to exist. They interpret death and destruction to mean annihilation, but actually these words are not used in the Scriptures to mean cessation of existence. The dead have not ceased to exist for they will be resurrected and will stand before God in judgment. Certainly there is no room for the annihilation theory in Revelation 14:10,11. The biblical meaning of death is that of separation. The first death is separation from the earth; the second death is eternal separation from God. All men have the gift of existence, but only the believer has the gift of eternal life. Biblically, life means fellowship with God. When the Bible speaks of the destruction or perdition of the sinner it means his ruin. When we destroy a thing, we merely ruin it so that it no longer serves its original purpose. Likewise, when the sinner is destroyed, he is merely ruined, cut off, abandoned. The human soul redeemed or unredeemed is immortal. A redeemed soul is one that enjoys immortal life with God. All will exist forever, but the quality of that existence depends upon one's attitude toward the Son of God and His redeeming gospel.

The Nature of Hell

The Bible gives us no complete view of hell. We do know that it is a place of punishment prepared for Satan and his angels; and that those who rebel against God and His Son will share the punishment. We do not know fully

of what the punishment consists. We do know, however, that fire is in most cases said to be a part of that torment. Some have questioned that it is literal fire, arguing that physical fire would not affect an immaterial soul. Yet, the sinner will have a resurrected body, as will the believer, and after the judgment he will be cast into a place called the lake of fire. Whatever may be the nature of the fire, it will be equally as dreadful as physical fire would be to the body.

We know further, that the torment will consist of the mental torment of the memory of sins and rebellion. Abraham said to the rich man, "Son, remember." Hell will be a place of eternal separation from God and from saved friends and loved ones. It will be a place of darkness and gloom where there is no enjoyment nor good humor. In fact, hell will be a place where the sinner will be so completely submerged in his filthiness, strife, selfishness and cynicism that his sin itself will become a form of torment. Nothing can be more revolting than sinful indulgence when it is inescapable. As heaven is Christ's abode, so hell will be Satan's abode. While heaven will be a place of praise and joy, hell will be a place of sorrow and awful blasphemy. In view of the plain teaching of the Bible regarding the destiny of the unbeliever, men do well to obey the Lord rather than to seek means of disproving the reality of eternal punishment.

Other Truths Concerning Hell

The Aspects of Hell

The word "hell" is used to translate several Greek and Hebrew words and does not always refer to the same place or state. When we use the word hell in the general sense it describes the total perdition of the sinner after death. However, actually the sinner passes through more than one state of perdition. At death the soul of the wicked goes to "Hades," which is the intermediate state of the unbeliever, where he awaits the final resurrection and judgment. The saints' bodies are resurrected at the coming of Christ, but the bodies of the unsaved are not raised until after the millennium, or one thousand years later. After the thousand years, the wicked dead are raised up to stand before the great white throne for final judgment.

After the final judgment of the wicked they are cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet of Revelation 13 have been tormented during the millennial period. The Bible clearly declares that the punishment of the lake of fire is unending, and it is quite obvious from the fact that the beast and the false prophet are still there after the thousand years without having been annihilated; furthermore their punishment is said to continue beyond the thousand years forever and ever. No one goes immediately after death to the lake of fire except the beast and the false prophet (antichrist). All other sinners, at death, are consigned to Hades which is a place of departed "spirits." There are no bodies in Hades, for the bodies of the wicked are in the grave. On the other hand, no one is cast into the lake of fire without a body. The unrepentant do not go to the lake of fire until after the resurrection of their bodies. In

the Old Testament, Hades is called "Sheol," and the lake of fire is called "Gehenna."

The Location of Hell

As to the exact location of hell we have no certain knowledge any more than we have the exact location of heaven. Where hell is can have no real importance. Some believe that hell is in the heart of the earth or at least that Hades is there. If this earth is to be destroyed and there is to be a new earth, it is not likely that the lake of fire would be located inside something destined to pass away. Yet, some believe that the new earth will simply be the same planet completely renovated on the surface. But, where hell is, it is a specific place just as heaven is a place.

The Duration of Hell

The eternal duration of hell has often been questioned or denied. The natural mind is repulsed by the thought of everlasting punishment. H.C. Thiessen writes, "Over against the opinion of man stands the clear and awful revelation of the Word of God. Between Dives and Lazarus there is a great gulf fixed so that passage from the one realm to the other is impossible (See Luke 16:26). In Gehenna *"their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"* (Mark 9:48). This seems to be a quotation from Isaiah 66:24, and it implies that there will always be something for the worm to feed on and for the fire to consume. The smoke of the torment of the worshippers of the beast is said to go up 'forever and ever' (Revelation 14:10,11). Surely, they are not singled out from among earth's wicked to receive a severer punishment than the other equally wicked men! It would have been good for Judas not to have been born (See Matthew 26:24). This could hardly be said of a man that would after centuries and millenniums be finally restored to eternal bliss." (Lectures in Systematic Theology, Page 503.)

Those who oppose the eternity of perdition on Bible grounds usually argue that the Greek words for "eternal" and "forever" mean only "age-long" and "for an age." It is true that the noun "aion" from which the adjective "eternal" is derived does sometimes mean an age, but in most cases it means an indefinite age. But actually the original meaning of the words "aion" and "aionios" has little to do with their meaning in the Scripture, because their use by the inspired writers is clear from the context and from a comparison of their use in different texts. The word "aionios" was the only word in Greek to express adequately the idea of indefinite or endless duration. It is used to describe the duration of the bliss of the redeemed as well as the punishment of the wicked. Thiessen explains, "The adjective 'aionios' occurs 70 times in the Greek Testament. It is used in reference to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Word, the blessing for believers, the punishment of the wicked, etc." Matthew 25:46 uses the same word in the same sentence to describe both the life of the righteous and the perdition of the wicked. If "aionios" does not mean "eternal" in the case of the wicked, how can we be sure it means "eternal" in reference to the life of the redeemed? If hell is only "age-long" then the life of God,

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND THE DESTINY OF SINNERS

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Does anything escape from judgment? _____

2. When will believers be judged? In respect to what will Christians be judged? _____

3. What are the books out of which men will be judged? _____

4. Does eternal destruction mean cessation of existence? _____

5. What does Matthew 25:46 say about the duration of the sinner's punishment? _____

6. Where is Satan chained for the thousand years? When will Satan be released? _____

7. What is the result of Satan's final rebellion? _____

HEAVEN

AIM: To comprehend why "We believe that heaven is the indescribably glorious habitation of the living God; and that thither the Lord has gone to prepare a place for His children; that unto this foursquare city, whose builder and maker is God, the earnest believers who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have overcome by the word of their testimony will be carried; that the Lord Jesus Christ will present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle; and that there in unutterable joy they will ever behold His wonderful face, in an everlasting kingdom whereunto comes no darkness nor light, neither sorrow, tears, pain, nor death, and wherein hosts of attending angels sweep their harps, sing the praise of our King, and bowing down before the throne cry: "Holy, holy, holy!" (The Declaration of Faith — Aimee Semple McPherson)

KEY VERSES:

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:2-6).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:1-7).

OPENING ACTIVITY: Read Revelation 21:1-7 together and then have the class write in one sentence what this Scripture ministers to them personally right now. Share these thoughts.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

The hope of personal immortality together with Christ Jesus in an ideal place from which all sin, suffering, and injustice are excluded is that which characterizes evangelical Christianity. This does not mean that the Christian's only concern is that of going to heaven, nor does this hope encourage one to neglect present duties and avoid present problems in the expectancy of heaven. Biblical teaching encourages diligent labor, victorious living, and unselfish service as the characteristics of heaven-bound pilgrims, and as the means of gaining the highest honors in the celestial sphere. Knowing that every believer will be rewarded and crowned with glory in proportion to his service and his labors, I am constrained to extend myself in Christian works in order that He who receives back every man's invested talent may be pleased to make me ruler over many things in His kingdom. We have a radiant hope of heaven, but we are not and must not on that account neglect the present world and its many problems in order to dream of future bliss.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*Does the hope of heaven lead us to passive waiting or to diligent service?*

On the other hand, we make no apology whatever for our hope and joyful anticipation of heaven's glory. This world is not our permanent home, nor are the affairs of this age the most important affairs in the plan of God. This world is so constituted that existence in it can never be ideal. When we have done the utmost possible in the way of reformation and social progress, the world will still be unfit as an eternal abode. Much has been done to give society an appearance of culture and beauty, but in reality the behavior of mankind still follows the law of the jungle. Redeemed souls cannot but long for that better country where divine law holds sway. The aim of the

gospel is not that of creating heaven on earth, but that of calling out of the "world" a redeemed people for the new heaven and the new earth. The redeemed citizens of God's country must always long for heaven as a traveler in a far country longs for his fatherland. The curse is here, which blights all phases of earthly life. That curse serves to keep man conscious of his ultimate destiny, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus. We agree that going to heaven is not the only aim of the gospel. A very important aim is that of living victoriously, serving lovingly, and witnessing powerfully in this present world; but do not forget that he labors most diligently and lovingly who labors together with God and who has hope of promotion to a better sphere when labor's day is done. Who will deny that the Scriptures teach that God's greatest objective in the redemption of His people is to take out from among men a select people for Himself, or that God's greatest fellowship with His people will be that enjoyed in the eternal ages to come. We ought to keep our feet on the ground, but we also may keep our heads in the clouds!

While heaven is one of the most common ideas of Christian thinking, it is at the same time one of the least investigated. Actually, we do not know very much about heaven. However, the Bible reveals more than the average person takes time to discover. There is much about heaven that we ought to know and that we ought to remember, for the hope of heaven serves as a powerful incentive to Christian endeavor and to victorious living. The hope of heaven is perhaps the most effective of all sources of encouragement and consolation in times of dismay, suffering, disappointment, persecution, and sorrow. Whatever the Word reveals to us about our eternal hope we ought to discover and to embrace.

On the other hand, it must be said that our knowledge of heaven is quite limited. There is much that we would like to know about heaven that is not revealed to us. Our curiosity about heaven is far from satisfied by what the Scriptures reveal. Yet, it is just as well for us that our curiosity is left unsatisfied, and that heaven is shrouded in a cloud of mystery. There is something enchanting about a prize which is only partly known. However, it may be that heaven is of such a nature that its characteristics cannot be understood too fully by finite creatures. Perhaps the Bible does tell us all that we are able to fathom about the future life. That which we have never seen or experienced can be described only by its likeness to something we have seen or experienced. If heaven is entirely different from anything earthly and material, if its experiences differ from those of this mundane sphere, then how would the inspired writers describe heaven to us? Perhaps our earthly languages would be inadequate to describe the nature of heaven. Therefore, let us be content to concentrate our attention upon what we do know about heaven, leaving the unknown to be divulged in the day of our abundant entrance into life eternal.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS REGARDING HEAVEN

John 14:2-6

Verse 2 — *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if*

it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★*What is the biblical meaning of "mansion"?*

Heaven is spoken of as the Father's house. Jesus uses the phrase, "my Father's house," on only one other occasion which was that of the cleansing of the temple. The temple was a type of heaven, a place where God dwelt and met with His people through the person of the high priest. Through Christ, our great High Priest, we have access to the Father and fellowship with Him in heaven. In the Jewish temple the room was only for Israel and those who became Israelites, but heaven is spacious enough for all. In heaven there are many mansions (abiding places). "Mansion" in the Bible use does not mean a huge palatial house, but simply an abiding place. We shall not be separated in separate castles in heaven; we shall occupy rooms as members of the family in the Father's house. That is, there will be close fellowship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ in our heavenly abode.

Note the certainty of this heavenly hope: *"If it were not so I would have told you."* Hope of heaven is not merely our dream of escaping death and oblivion. It is based upon a promise of our Lord who alone of all visitors to earth has, Himself, been in heaven. He would not permit us to be deceived in this hope; He would have plainly told us if there had been no further existence after death or no blessed life in fellowship with our Creator.

Jesus was certain of the immortality of the believers, because His express mission was that of preparing for them a place in the future inheritance. Now His preparing a place did not have reference to any work of building He was going to do in heaven itself, but rather to the work of redemption He was going to accomplish upon the cross, along with the presentation of the proofs of that work before the Father in heaven. The emphasis is not on "a place" but on "for you." Heaven as a place already existed, but it was not for us until Jesus died upon the cross.

Verse 3 — *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

Our entrance into heaven will be in company with Jesus, Himself. At His coming, the dead will rise and the living saints will, together with the resurrected saints, be ushered into heaven by our Lord. He is personally returning in order to conduct us into the presence of the Father. This is a task He will not leave to another. There must be some sublime purpose of our redemption and heavenly existence, for our entrance into the foursquare city is an event too important to be supervised by even the highest archangel. Heaven is more than a reward for the believer; his redemption and heavenly abiding will

be for the glory and honor of God and of His dear Son. In heaven we shall delight in the Lord and He will delight in us.

Note that the desirable features of heavenly life held before the disciples was the hope of being where Jesus was. To the intelligent Christian the thought of being where Jesus is and of sharing in His work and creative plans, and of participating in His glorious reign, is far more attractive than that of merely dwelling in a splendid place. The closer and more intimate our fellowship with our Lord is now, the more it will mean to us to be with Him in heaven.

Verse 4 — *“And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”*

Jesus had informed His disciples about the place where He was going and about the way that leads to it, even though they may not have understood Him. It should have been clear that the way was that of the new birth and of active faith in Christ.

Verse 6 — *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Christianity is the way, it is the truth, and it is life, because Christianity is Christ. To man as a voyager, Christ is the way; to man as an intelligent being, He is the truth; and to man as a creature, Christ is the life. Without Christ man is strayed, deceived, and dying. Christ the way leads us into God's service; Christ the truth reveals to us God's will; and Christ the life makes our service of God everlasting. Without Christ no one can find the Father. The highest religious attainment of the wisdom-seeking Greeks was that of conceiving of the Unknown God.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

★NOTE to instructor:

Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Are we certain of the reality of heaven? How do we know?

Verse 1 — *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”*

Here our physical bodies are referred to with the figure of a tent which is pictured only temporarily in a place and which is quite perishable. When this tent is worn out we have an eternal tabernacle not of human construction erected in that place where we shall never more break camp.

Verse 2 — *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”*

The insecurity of our present tent makes us yearn for that permanent house. Who has ever lived a long time in

a tent who did not long to be at home? Here the body begins to be spoken of figuratively as a garment.

Verse 3 — *“If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.”*

Paul had the desire to be clothed upon directly with his resurrection body which the Lord will give at His coming. To die before Christ came would be to pass a period of time without a body; that is to be naked. Even the Christians of that day longed to be still living when Christ came.

Verse 4 — *“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”*

Paul was not groaning to be unclothed at death, but to be clothed upon with his incorruptible body at Christ's coming. No Christian should desire to die — at least, not before the appointed time. We are by no means afraid of death, but we do not desire death as an escape. We do, however, long for the coming of Christ and for the glorified existence which will then begin.

Verse 5 — *“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”*

The very purpose of our redemption is that we may be glorified together with Christ at His coming. God has also through the Spirit given us the “earnest” or inward assurance of a part in that glorification. It is that inward “earnest” that makes us groan in anticipation of Christ's appearing.

Verses 6-8 — *“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”*

Our life and walk in the flesh is at best, a walk of faith. We are yet short of the full spiritual existence which is our purchased privilege. We do not seek death, but neither do we fear it in any sense. In our trials and tests we are quite willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord even if we must die before Jesus comes. It seems to be clearly inferred here that the believer who dies, even before Jesus comes, will go immediately to the presence of the Lord. There is no hint of soul sleeping here. Presence with the Lord is the immediate lot of believers who put off their earthly tents.

Revelation 14:13

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

These words were spoken at a time of great persecution and sorrow for the Lord's people. Such were their sufferings that their dying was a blessing. While the believer does not covet to die nor to evade any of his

earthly tasks, yet of such a nature is the relation to a sinful and unbelieving world that his death may be described as a blessing. With this in mind Paul wrote to the Thessalonians admonishing, "that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." The death of believing loved ones should not be the occasion of our much sorrow, for their departure is a blessing to them and, in a sense a blessing to us, for the presence of loved ones in heaven gives us a greater urge to persevere in the Lord and to make our calling sure.

The fact that our works do follow is an important one. It places a great value upon our present tasks, and a great responsibility upon us to perform the kind of works we would like to have follow us. If we are patient and faithful to Christ now in the performance of the duties given to us, we shall find a record of those works in heaven of which we shall be happy. Now, is there not another sense in which our works will follow us? Will there not be in heaven an opportunity to continue serving our Lord; an opportunity to complete our works to a degree not possible in our present brief span of life? As has been suggested in a past lesson, we shall not be inactive in heaven, but engaged in service many times more important and significant than our present service, although in a way our service in heaven will be a continuation of our present service. This verse tells us that we shall rest from our labors, but the word translated "labors" means the fatigue and weariness of earthly labor, not the service itself. In heaven we shall serve, but without weariness.

Revelation 21:1-7

Verse 1 — "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

For the final era, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The new order will be carried out in surroundings which bear no marks of the past conflict. If we remember that sin began in heaven with Satan's rebellion against God, we perhaps can understand why God would replace even heaven with something new. The millennial kingdom will be the consummating era of the history of earth. With Christ's reign of peace and Satan's defeat, the drama of redemption will be complete; man's fall in the garden will have been completely adjusted and the honor and holiness of God will have been entirely vindicated. With a new heaven and a new earth, God will begin something the nature of which we can only dimly foresee, but in it we have a part and for the sake of it God has redeemed for Himself a people out of trial and conflict.

The absence of the sea tells us three things: (1) there will be no more unrest, (2) there will be no more separation, (3) there will be no more mystery.

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★For what will we exchange our earthly tabernacles?

Verse 2 — "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The New Jerusalem will be the dwelling place of the redeemed people of God and in it will be every provision for the perfectly ideal state. A city speaks of communion and of cooperation. Man will still be a social being in heaven, recognizing his friends and fellow beings and working with them in the Lord's service. In the New Jerusalem there will be social life without selfish ambition, competitive strife, envy or hatred. Love will have full manifestation. The heavenly city will fulfill at last the unattainable idea of a perfect social order.

Verse 3 — "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Perfect unanimity and cooperation will be achieved because God will be the center of all activity. When God is known as He truly is in His perfect holiness, power, glory, and love, every soul will love Him perfectly and will willingly make Him the center of all thought, praise, loyalty, and service. God will Himself be the center and central organizing principle of all activity in the new sphere. Everyone's desire will be that of honoring the great God who is worthy, and of performing His service. There will be no selfishness, for what is God's glory and praise will also be for the believer's greatest blessedness. He will serve himself best who serves God best —and is that not true actually in this present age? Oh, that men knew it!

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What do we mean by "heaven"?

Verse 4 — "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Death, sorrow, pain, and tears will be eliminated from the New Jerusalem, because the causes of them will have been eliminated. These woes of earth are the result of sin and mortality; they are the price of rebellion. When perfect harmony shall exist, every cause of death, sorrow, tears and pain will cease to exist. All suffering comes from three factors: (1) bodily infirmity due to our mortality, (2) frustration of our ambitions, and (3) severance from God. When our bodies are incorruptible, our desires in conformity with God's will and, therefore, attainable, and when we are perfectly united to God in fellowship, there can be no more pain, sorrow, tears, nor death.

Verse 5 — "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

There will be nothing in the new order to bring back memories of earth's disgrace. Everything will be new. Who would not like to begin anew with a perfectly clean slate and with new opportunity to serve beyond the reach of sin? Such an opportunity will be ours if we are Christ's faithful servants. He who commanded John to write this promise made sure that the certainty of its fulfillment was emphasized. There is no doubt whatever of the personal immortality of the Christian believers.

Verse 6 — *"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*

The Lord will be the Alpha and the Omega of the New Jerusalem, the beginning and the end; the all and in all. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He will be everything from "A" to "Z." All interest and objectives of the new order will be centered in the Lord. In heaven life will flow freely in its fullest manifestation. Heaven is not merely everlasting existence but everlasting *life*. Life that comes from the Lord Himself. We cannot know what it means to live until we share God's life in its full bestowal. However, redeemed life lived in the Holy Spirit is a small foretaste of the future realization.

Verse 7 — *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."*

What a promise to overcomers! They will inherit all things. There will be no private ownership in the new city, for every soul will be an heir of all that exists. There will be no part or privilege of the new earth that will not belong equally to all overcomers. So that, by faith, all things are now ours if we abide in Christ. We who are now the sons of God in Christ will then enjoy every blessing and benefit of full sonship.

Revelation 22:3-5

Verse 3 — *"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."*

The curse came upon the earth when man lost direct fellowship with God on account of sin. When sin is removed and God again rules in the midst, the curse will be non-existent. Our communion with God in the new city will be much sweeter even than that which Adam enjoyed in the garden, because then we shall have witnessed the love of God revealed in His delivering us out of the curse. Sin was not of God's making, but He has taken advantage of the fact of sin to reveal Himself to His creatures in His redeeming relationship. In eternity we shall joyously serve our Redeemer God.

Verse 4 — *"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."*

As we look upon God's face, His character shall be impressed upon us. We shall bear His name in our very countenance. We shall be His sons and we shall resemble Him.

Verse 5 — *"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."*

God shall be our central interest, our life, our character, our King and even our light. Heaven shall be beyond the sun and the solar system, for no rays of the sun fall there. The new sphere will be illuminated by God's glory. Life will no longer be marked by days and years which are related to the earth's revolutions and journeys around the sun. God, not the sun, will be the center and life will be timeless. There will be no more clocks, calendars, thermometers, barometers, compasses or scales. God will be our sun, our gravity, and our focal point of interest. Let us surrender to Him now our whole being, and make Him the center and circumference of our life.

THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★ *Where will the New Jerusalem be?*

It Is a Hope of Betterment

Paul said, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Whatever heaven is, it is better than earth. Whatever it affords, it is more than that afforded in this earthly life. Heaven is gain; it is improvement; it is more sublime than earth's most desirable environment. Whoever dies in the Lord betters his circumstances. Death is promotion, not demotion. The grave is not the end of the way, but the passage to a better way; it is not a blind alley, it is the opening to eternity's boulevard. Life in heaven is such an improvement over life on earth that a man is said to be a loser if he exchanges his hope of heaven for all the world with its riches and kingdoms. Yes, to die is great gain. Yet like Paul, a Christian is content to receive that gain in God's time. Earth is a very poor place compared with our Father's house, but we are willing to work for God here until our promotion comes. Adoniram Judson would have preferred much to have enjoyed the comforts of America to the jungles and prisons of Burma, but a sense of faithfulness to duty kept him there for thirty-seven years until his death. We often become weary of earth and hopeful of our homegoing, but as long as God has a work for us to do here we are willing to remain, that at last we may rise to heaven's best reward. He who has the brightest hope of heaven should work hardest on the way.

It Is a Hope of Divine Fellowship

Heaven is our Father's house. There we shall be able to draw closer to Him than we ever can here on earth. We are yearning for heaven when we sing "Nearer My God to Thee." When we pray "Our Father which art in heaven," we remind ourselves that heaven, our final abode, will be in the Father's presence. Because of the curse upon the earth, it is impossible for us to see the

true handiwork of God, but in heaven His works will be all around us in their perfect unsullied beauty. Close fellowship with God is now enjoyed at intervals, but then it will be unceasing and complete.

It Is a Hope of Companionship With Christ

Jesus said, *"that where I am there ye may be also."* There can be no higher incentive to our living worthy of our high calling than the hope of being where Jesus our Lord is. Paul said, *"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, he also will deny us"* (2 Timothy 2:11,12). The apostle's great motive for desiring to be absent from the body was that of being present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). Without the redemptive work of Christ there would be no certain hope of heaven for anyone. Our hopes are bound up in Him. Our Christian relationship is a personal one. We are not wedded to an idea, a doctrine, an organization, nor to a system, but to a Person. Christ is our all and in all. Our Christian experience is one of fellowship with our risen Lord. Wherever Christ is, that place will be heaven. Heaven is not so much a paradise because of what is there, but because of who is there. The most beautiful paradise God could create would be soon uninviting without our Lord in the midst of it. In heaven we shall be with Christ; we shall reign with Him, participate in what He does, and share in the delight from what He accomplishes. Heaven will be a sphere of great and significant activity in which we shall take part; and the director of all things and personal leader will be our Lord and Redeemer.

It Is a Hope of Rest

The writer of Hebrews said, *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief"* (Hebrews 4:10,11). Heaven is a place of rest, but not a place of inactivity. In heaven we shall rest while we work. We shall run and not be weary, we shall walk and faint not. In heaven there will be no idleness, but our activities will be no cause of fatigue, boredom, or weariness. We shall rest in heaven because we shall possess glorified bodies not subject to breakdown, and because our works in the new sphere will be of such a nature as to delight us constantly. *"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat"* (Revelation 7:16).

It Is a Hope of Peace

Our life on earth is a constant struggle. There is a strife within us between two natures. We are constantly opposed by the enemy. Our ideals are constantly in conflict with the ideals of a worldly civilization. The nations of the world are continually warring. Even among brethren there are some struggles and opposing wills. We are not defeated in our battles because Christ leads us to victory and gives us a certain peace within, but we are, nevertheless, aware of and affected by earth's inevitable strife. Paul, though he was quite victorious, said, *"I have fought a good fight."* Heaven

presents the hope of a strifeless realm; of a place where we shall be beyond the reach of sin and Satan. There all wills will be reconciled and all disputes settled. There will be room in heaven for individuality, but no strife will result, for there will be no selfishness. Revelation pictures the new earth with *"no more sea."* (Revelation 21:1.) The sea stands for the unrest of the nations. In heaven there will be no more waves of unrest. We now enjoy peace of soul, but only when we have entered into heaven shall we experience peace in its fullest measure.

It Is a Hope of Glory

In Romans 2:6,7,10, we read, *"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: . . . But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good . . ."* The glory of earth is won at too high a price and is short lived and empty. We hope for a glory that fadeth not. Our glory is eternal because it is the glory of Christ. *"Christ in you the hope of glory."*

It Is the Hope of Life

Eternal life is not merely endless existence. Even the lost have endless existence. Life in the spiritual sense means to share the life of God. It means to abide in right relationship to God. Death is not the cessation of existence, but blighted existence. Death is existence separated from the source of real life. We can have only a dim comprehension now of the significance of eternal life, but we know that it will be meaningful, complete, creative, and divinely ordered existence in a perfectly ideal realm. The redeemed Christian life here in its highest manifestation is only a foretaste of the fully abundant life which awaits the faithful of the Lord.

It Is a Hope of Inheritance

Peter speaks of this hope as follows, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"* (1 Peter 1:3,4). What a precious promise this is. When Jesus arose from the dead He entered into an inheritance which God bestowed upon Him for His work of incarnation and redemption. He has been made ruler of all things. We who are the redeemed of the Lord shall become joint heirs with Christ of that incomparable legacy. We shall rule and reign and share with the King of Kings. (See Hebrews 9:15.)

It Is a Hope of Unlimited Realization

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Heaven will be a place where we shall realize all unrealized dreams that conform to God's will. All that we have desired to be in character, we shall be in heaven, for we shall be like Him. The praises we could not perfectly express here will there flow forth

from our hearts. The tasks we could not finish here will be brought to full realization in heaven. If we have been faithful in a few things we shall be made ruler over many things. Our ten talents multiplied will provide for opportunities greater than any we have imagined. No, heaven is not a place of inactivity; it is the place where we shall carry out noble activities to full realization under the direction of our Lord. All our creative ability will be given ample time, scope, and inspiration for its most complete fulfillment. The fact that a city, the New Jerusalem, will be the center of heaven's activity shows organized and guided participation in a great divine plan. (See 1 Corinthians 13:9-12.)

HEAVEN — A PLACE

★NOTE to instructor:

Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★What familiar features of the earth will be eliminated from the new earth?

Heaven Is a Real Place

Jesus said to His disciples, *"I go to prepare a place for you . . . When Jesus comes, He is coming in a visible manner just as He went into heaven. When He comes there will be a real resurrection of real bodies, in an incorruptible state, followed by a real rapture of living believers. At the rapture the saints will be caught up and taken to some real place. We shall have real bodies, for we are going to live on the earth and reign with Christ, after which we shall take up abode on a new transformed earth. In fact, a close study of the Bible will show us that, except for several brief stays in the heaven of God, the greater part of our eternal existence will be on the millennial new earth. We shall do more than play harps on a cloud; we shall work for God on a real earthly plane in which there will be no sickness, strife, death, suffering or limitations. This present earth will dissolve in a fiery destruction, but God already has plans for a better earth where life will be even more real than it is here and now. Here we are in some measure separated from God, because of sin and earth's curse, but this imperfect condition is not forever. We are redeemed from sin here in order that we may ultimately walk and talk with our Lord in a sphere where there is no separation, where there is truly "nothing between." If we are true believers, redeemed by the finished work of Christ, we yearn for the realization of that glad morning when we shall be with Him and see Him face to face.*

Another indication that heaven or the future heavenly sphere is a real place is that God has redeemed our bodies as well as our souls and that He will resurrect these bodies from death and glorify them. When we stand in God's presence in the coming kingdom we shall do so in real bodies suited to our new existence. We shall have real existence in real bodies in a real place.

Heaven Is an Ample Place

In the Father's house there are many abiding places. While not everyone is going to heaven, its population will not be small. There will be a company there as numerous as the sands of the sea out of every nation, kindred, tribe, and people. Certainly no single sect, group or denomination has an exclusive corner on salvation. God's people are a chosen few by comparison, but in reality they add up to a numberless multitude. There are sects without a single foreign missionary who claim to be God's elect. Obviously such claims are false. God does not see men according to their ecclesiastical or denominational affiliations, but in their relationship to His Son Jesus Christ. All groups that are getting men to Christ are used of God. We do not know how large the new heavens and the new earth will be, but we know that God has room for all believing people that can be won to Christ around the world. We have a big God, with a big heart, a big plan, a big message and a big heaven. Let us go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. If we work for ten millenniums we can never fill heaven. God's people of all believing groups should work together today for the greatest soul winning project the world has ever seen. There is still room in the Father's house for the dying multitudes and God has no messengers except us to carry the invitation to them. We must not be concerned only with going to heaven, but also with taking others with us that God's house may be full.

Heaven Is a Safe Place

Wherever heaven is, it is a place beyond the reach of evil, death, sin, sickness, and any harmful agent. Here we are constantly menaced by the threat of failure, poverty, sickness, and death. Neither our lives nor our possessions are secure. Our society is constantly being disrupted by war, and threatened with invasion. Every nation in history has either been overthrown by foreign enemies or has broken down from inward weakness. All our earthly hopes are undermined by uncertainty. Our castles are all built upon foundations of sand. Our lives are a sea of uncertainty. We are always fleeing from some enemy, physical, spiritual or psychological. Why are we not permitted to find some place of security? No doubt the reason why we are insecure on earth is that sin has separated us from God and that God in dealing with us has so ordered that we not be secure until we are with Him. Earth's insecurity drives us to the only safe refuge, which is in Christ and ultimately with Him in the coming life.

The fact that there is no more sea in heaven and on the new earth speaks of the end of uncertainty and the end of trouble. Seas are swept with storms and our voyages across them are fraught with dangers and fears. No one who puts out to sea can be absolutely certain of reaching port. Life in the new sphere is not that of a mariner but one completely unhampered by limitations of space, weather, terrain or climate. In heaven we are as safe as God Himself, for all our activities will be directed by the Creator and sustainer of all things. God through our present hazards, is teaching us to find security in Him Who can guide us safely to port and establish us in

a safe place.

Heaven Is a Beautiful Place

In all of us there is a longing for order, proportion, harmony and beauty. We were not created for chaos, but for the cosmos. All our efforts on earth are made to create beauty and order in the community, in the social order, among nations, and in our souls and minds. All our efforts are disappointing, however, because of the ugliness with which sin mars our work. Even the beauties of nature are to some extent marred by decay,

weather and man's blunders. Even the beauty that exists in nature is imperfectly seen and appreciated, because of our marred vision and capacity for appreciation.

Heaven will be beautiful beyond description, covered with the glory of God, and when we are there, we shall view the splendor and hear the music with senses that are freed from all mortality's restrictions. Ought we not to be more thoughtful of this awaited place that is real, ample, safe and beautiful?

CLOSING ACTIVITY: How would you describe heaven to a child? Instruct the class to write a paragraph or poem, draw a picture, or dialog with the person sitting next to them depicting their concept of heaven.

If you are studying alone, write your response on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

HEAVEN

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

GROUP STUDY: It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Does the hope of heaven lead us to passive waiting or to diligent service? _____

2. What is the biblical meaning of "mansion"? _____

3. Are we certain of the reality of heaven? How do we know? _____

4. For what will we exchange our earthly tabernacles? _____

5. What do we mean by "heaven"? _____

6. Where will the New Jerusalem be? _____

7. What familiar features of the earth will be eliminated from the new earth? _____
