

THE GREAT I AMs OF JESUS (GOSPEL OF JOHN)

by John Caylor

Caylor's exposition of the seven 'I Am' statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John — I am the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the way the truth and the life, and the true vine.

12 Chapters

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01-I Am the Bread of Life

I Am the Bread of Life

AFTER a busy period of service in Jerusalem where Jesus performed miracles of healing and held many discourses, teaching the people, the Lord went into what might have been a time of rest and retirement. Crossing the Sea of Galilee, He found that a great crowd of people had seen Him leave the eastern shore of the lake and had gone by land in the hope of seeing Him on the other side. As Jesus sat down with His disciples on the mountainside up from the lake shore, He looked over a multitude, assembling to hear Him. They had come because of His miracles. "And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased" (John 6:2).

The miracles of Jesus had created such a stir in Jerusalem that it was necessary for Him to leave that area if He were to teach His disciples. Here on the shores of Galilee, He found that as He taught the disciples, there was a waiting multitude whom He must satisfy. These people had come because they had seen or heard about His miracles of healing.

Time slipped away until it was near the close of day. From the time the multitude had left home, the people had not eaten. They had forgotten their hunger, but Jesus did not fail to recognize their need. He spoke to His disciples about the opportunity. Philip and Andrew had suggestions but little faith. It was the latter, who found a lad who had been thoughtful enough to bring a lunch. Jesus took the boy's lunch and provided a feast for the five thousand people waiting to be fed.

Jesus commanded the disciples to organize the crowd so the people could be served. Then He multiplied the loaves and fishes and gave them to the disciples to distribute among the thousands until all were satisfied.

The result of the feeding of the five thousand was that many of the people believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. They said: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14).

The Jews had the idea that when their Messiah came into the world, He would reign over an earthly kingdom. They would think of Him as prophet, priest and king. Now that they believed that Jesus was the prophet who was to come, the multitude sought to make Jesus king.

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).

Unlike men with earthly ambitions, Jesus was not tempted by the flattery and honor bestowed upon Him by men who had a wrong conception of His purpose and ministry. He slipped away into the mountains.

On a former occasion, Jesus had been tempted by Satan to assume the role of king and express His authority. It was the short way to accomplish the divine purpose, Satan had assured Him. Now

that the people wanted to crown Him king, Jesus went away from them into the mountain to pray.

The disciples started across the lake. In the midst of the night Jesus joined them in the boat. The next morning the multitude followed Jesus to the other side of the lake. There they found Him and inquired about His voyage across the lake. They had seen the disciples go by boat. They saw Jesus with the disciples on the other side and asked, "Rabbi, when comest thou hither?" Jesus knew what was in their minds. They were interested in His miracles. They wanted to know how to multiply loaves and fishes. Jesus wanted them to know that life goes deeper. When they wanted to know how to do the works of God, they were told, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

Then the people wanted a sign. They spoke of the miracle of the manna in the desert. Moses gave them manna, what did Jesus have to offer? Yesterday they had wanted to crown Him as king; today they wanted another miracle for further proof that He was worthy.

Instead of encouraging the multitude to believe in His miracles and further enhance His popularity, Jesus immediately tried to turn their minds from the physical to the spiritual.

"Moses gave you not the bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," said Jesus. He continued, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33). The disciples cried out, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!"

Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). The manna which Moses gave to the children of Israel had to be renewed every morning. The bread which Jesus offered, Himself, was given once for all. Of course, there is a renewal of fellowship with Jesus every day. It is necessary to commune with Him constantly in order to get the greatest benefit from His life-giving sustenance.

Besides, Jesus declared to His listeners, it was not Moses who gave the manna every morning; it was God. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40), Jesus declared emphatically. This led to the definite issue. Were the Jews to receive Jesus as the bread of life or were they to have bread through His miracles of creation?

There is a vast gulf separating the spiritual and the physical. The audience, which had listened so patiently to Jesus when He was speaking about loaves and fishes and bread which they could eat, then turned away from Him because He was talking about heavenly manna. "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:41).

The crowd began to identify Jesus as "the son of Joseph." They could not understand how He could have come down from heaven. It was easy enough to see how manna could be given by a heavenly miracle, but here was a man whom they could not accept. It is one thing to eat bread; it is quite another to accept a man as the way of life.

Jesus was not asking the people to accept a mere man. He identified Himself as the Son of God. He, the Son of God, was and is the bread of life. Whoever eats of that bread will never hunger. He will have eternal life springing up in Him like a well of water springing up with refreshing strength.

As bread is necessary to the sustenance of life, so Christ is necessary to eternal life.

There is no way to live except through daily nourishment. Life comes through eating. There is no way to have eternal life except through Jesus Christ the Lord. He is necessary to life.

As bread is suited to all, young and old, weak and strong, savage and civilized, so Jesus is suited to all who are suited to Him.

- The rich and the poor need Christ.
- The illiterate and the educated must have Jesus for everlasting life.
- The savage and the civilized must come to the feet of Jesus.

The story of airmen stranded on cannibal islands in the Pacific was repeated over and over during World War II. As the airmen approached a village expecting to find cannibals, they were met by saints, who gave them food and shelter. Out of such experiences some American airmen came home as Christians. Others found the Lord more precious to them and yielded to a divine urge to give their lives in missionary service.

When Christ was preached to cannibals and savage men were converted, they became citizens of a heavenly kingdom and hosts to men in need on their earthly island. So is every man who eats the bread of life and receives heavenly manna through Jesus Christ.

As bread is necessary for daily food, so daily communion with Christ is necessary for spiritual growth.

To the child bread is necessary for growth; to the adult bread is necessary for daily strength. So to feast upon Jesus is necessary for growth. Daily to communicate with Him is essential to spiritual health. Jesus as the bread of life is necessary for daily food.

As bread satisfies the hungry body, so Jesus satisfies the hungry soul.

The multitudes looked to Jesus for physical bread. He pointed the people to the bread of life and to the sustenance of spiritual feasting. It was a difficult transition for the people to make.

They could understand physical bread; they could not understand spiritual bread. They had heard about the manna of Moses, but the bread of life was something new to them.

How different were the Jews in Jesus' audience from us? We are able to understand things we can weigh or measure; it is difficult for us to understand spiritual matters.

As bread is prepared. So was Jesus prepared before the foundation of the world to give Himself a ransom for the sins of men.

Bread grows as wheat, ripens as grain, is cut down in the harvest, is ground into flour, and is subjected to the oven's fire for finishing. Jesus grew from a babe, became a boy, ripened into manhood, was cut down by His enemies, and was ground into sacrificial death as the bread of life. He can give sustenance to all who believe on Him.

Jesus offers the bread of life, prepared from the foundation of the world. It is available to those who are prepared for it through accepting Him personally as Saviour and Lord.

02-I Am the Light of the World

I Am the Light of the World

Two of the great “I Am’s” of Jesus were spoken during the discourse in the court of the temple after the incident with the woman taken in adultery. Here Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

One of the darkest scenes of our Lord’s ministry is this one. Double-dealing religious leaders were representing a double standard of morals. Every one of the Pharisees involved in the bringing of the sinful woman before Jesus was himself guilty of sin so black as to convict him and make him walk away after Jesus said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7).

Here in the night of sin, in the darkness of a woman’s despair, in the confusion of religious forms, Jesus spoke out, “I am the light of the world.”

When God said, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3), He provided luster for the hills, red for the rose, sparkle for the tipling streams, rainbows against the dark clouds, and beauty for the landscape.

“And there was light” (Genesis 1:3) to open the eyes of God’s creatures, to lift up the heads of all who sleep, to burst open the blossoms of beautiful flowers and fill the atmosphere with the fragrance of morning.

When God made light, He showed the way to wandering feet; He revealed truth to wondering minds; and He guided homeward the prodigal son. “And there was light” for all who look, for all who care, and for all who will.

God said, “Let there be light,” and the heavens declared the glory of God; the firmament showed his handiwork. The sun, the moon, and the stars came forth to sing the praises of the giver of every good and perfect gift, the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by the turning.

God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.”

LIGHT FOR THE ISRAELITES

Christ is seen in the pillar of cloud and fire leading and shielding the Israelites. The coming Messiah can be seen in the period of darkness which fell upon the Egyptians, as Moses was trying to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt’s bondage. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings” (Exodus 10:21-23).

It is indeed interesting to note the bright spot in that intense darkness which covered Egypt, "but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." As Jesus was in the creation, so He was here in Egypt giving light to God's children. The Messianic hope shone brightly in the darkness of Egypt.

As the children of Israel came to the Red Sea, they were followed by the Egyptians. What could they do? In answer to the prayer of Moses "the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Exodus 14:19-20).

Here is the answer of God to His waiting children. He gave them a pillar of cloud which had the objective of light for the Children of Israel and darkness for the enemy.

The cloud both veiled and revealed the glory of God.

- To those who would look to God for leadership and guidance, to those who would trust in the Heavenly Father, the pillar was a light.

- To those who refused to recognize God, the pillar was a cloud engulfing in darkness.

So Christ is the light of the world to those who will believe and trust Him; the preaching of Christ becomes foolishness to those who will not believe.

The cloud was both a shelter from the scorching heat to the Israelites and a source of discomfort for the enemy. Dr. Maclaren states it this way: "The cloud was a shelter from the scorching heat, and a fire to cheer in the darkness of the night." As the cloud protected and comforted Israel, it confused and cursed the Egyptians.

The pillar led in Israel's movement when God's people were to go forward; it remained stationary above them when God meant for them to stay in camp. So Christ is the inspiration to His followers to go forward; or He is their stay when He commands them to tarry for enduement from on high.

The pillar was a guide for the children of Israel to lead them in their march by day or to give them light for an emergency march during the night. The pillar was a cloud of darkness to keep the enemy from following, whether it was day or night. Christ is the guide for His followers and will keep them day and night.

The pillar of cloud covered the tabernacle in the wilderness. When Moses, or Joshua, or Aaron served the Lord in the tabernacle, the cloud hovered over the tabernacle. Those who went in to commune with God according to the ritual sacrifice came out with the glory of God shining upon them.

Every man of Israel stood at his tent door looking toward the tabernacle and received the reflection of the glory of God from the faces of those who ministered within. So Christ is inspiration to those who speak of Him and serve Him and He is reflected light upon those who come near Him. He who said of Himself, "I am the light of the world," also said to His followers, "Ye are the light of the world." THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD As Jesus said "I am the light of the world," He launched His march upon the world of darkness. Light is positive. Jesus is positive and aggressive in His

program for the salvation of the world. Napoleon considered himself the world's greatest military leader even though he was spending his last days in exile. He said of Jesus that He had no armies and yet marched more men into world conquest than all the armies of history. He declared that Jesus was no military leader but was more powerful than any military general who had dominated men.

Wherever Jesus has marched in world conquest, civilization has followed in His train. The march of civilization has been measured by the march of Christianity. There is a question, of course, concerning what men call civilization. To be educated does not necessarily mean to be civilized. To have wealth and position is not a guarantee of civilization. The form of dress does not exemplify civilization or the lack of it. But wherever Jesus has gone or His gospel has been preached, men have grown in their relationships with one another and in providing for themselves a way of life that is called civilization.

Jesus is truly the light of the world as men become enlightened. When men are introduced to Jesus, they become interested in the whole world. Whatever the world has learned and has available in its libraries, Christian men seek to learn, when Christ comes into the hearts of men, they build enlightened communities. Look at the schools, the libraries, the laboratories, and the expeditions men make, and there you will find Christ, either as men have believed on Him or as they have been inspired through those who did believe on Him to enlighten the world.

Jesus is the light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). John the Baptist introduced Jesus as having in Him life, "and the life was the light of men." He declared further that ". . . the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4-5).

Of himself John declared that he was not the light which he represented but was sent to bear witness of one, who is the light of the world. The true light, which lights every man that comes into the world, is the life of men; and the light comes from that life within.

The light of Jesus is seen in the countenances of those who believe and follow Him. Jesus sought to teach His followers through the Sermon on the Mount that those who believe in Him become the light of the world. They are compared to candlesticks set in prominent places to give light to all who are near. Because of the reflected glory of Christ in the lives of believers, Jesus commanded, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Christians not only should act like it but look like it. John, in his first epistle, said all that John the Baptist had said about Jesus and all that was said in the Gospel of John, then added emphasis by declaring that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

Not only is He the light for the Christian, but He is the absence of darkness to the Christian. John says further, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:6-7).

The Christian may walk through dark places, but he will not be in darkness if he is with Christ.

There will be times when the Christian may not be able to see his way because of the seeming darkness, but if he is with Jesus and has committed himself to the Lord, he will be walking in the

light, in spite of the darkness of his surroundings. If his circumstances find him in the Lord, he will find the Lord in his circumstances. THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Recently I turned the electric light switch in the kitchen of our home. There was a flash of light and then it was dark. I thought something was wrong with the switch and installed a new one. After turning on the light again, there was another flash, and the light went out again. The short, which made the flash, was not in the switch but in the wiring of the light fixture. When the fixture was repaired, light was restored.

Upon examining the bulb after the light blew out the first time, I found nothing in the appearance of the bulb to show that the inside filter had been damaged. It was the same with the second bulb which had been used; outwardly it showed no difference, inwardly there was a broken space in the filter. There was no light.

When John spoke of the light which was life and the life which was the light of men, he was picturing the inward glow of a Christian experience manifesting itself in an outer glow. When the life of Christ is within the human soul, the light of Christ shines in the human life. Light is life and in it is no darkness at all.

All through the teachings of Christ is the analogy of light and life versus darkness and death. Light is the reflection of the life of God in man; darkness results in death. The Ultimate goal of the light of Christ is life here and hereafter; the ultimate end of darkness is death, physical death and the second death.

Light dispels darkness. When a candle is lit, it dispels the darkness which surrounds. It may be in a large room, but when one strikes a match or lights a candle, all the darkness in the room is affected. Light destroys darkness. There may be shades and shadows, but where there is light, darkness is dispelled. The Christian's influence may be small, but it is not wasted. Wherever the Christian is, there is a light which glows in the darkness.

The light of Christ points the way down a new path. When one becomes a Christian, he has turned around and faced in the opposite direction.

He has been walking in the path of disobedience and sin; he turns around in repentance and faces toward the light. The light of Christ is the guide along the new path. When one is facing the sun, he sees no shadow; when one is looking toward Christ, if there are shadows, they are behind. If there is darkness ahead in the Christian's path, he is facing in the wrong direction. Let him turn around and face Christ. When he follows Jesus his feet are on the white way that leads in the right direction.

Jesus is the light to eternal life. When the psalmist spoke of walking through the shadows, even the shadow of death, he could say that he feared no evil because God was with him. When the Christian walks through the shadows of life and death, he need fear no evil because Christ has lighted the way.

- He has been through the shadows, He has overcome death.
- He has taken the sting out of death by the resurrection.

- He has gained the victory over sin by letting it be crucified on His person.
- He has lighted the path of those who believe on Him, and He makes life worth living here.
- He makes eternal life sure.

Believe on Him; receive Him; walk in the light as He is in the light; and heaven is at the end of the path.

03-I Am from Above

I Am from Above

Toward the latter part of the earthly ministry of our Lord, the Pharisees decided to arrest Jesus and stop rumors concerning His miracles and His being a prophet. They sent officers to catch Him in His words and arraign Him before the Sanhedrin. Instead of arresting Jesus as they were commissioned to do, the officers came back with the report, "Never man spake like this man." Nicodemus spoke up in favor of a hearing before Jesus could be condemned. He was answered by the finality of genuine prejudice, "For out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Jesus was in a court of the temple, "and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them" (John 8:2). Since the scribes and Pharisees had been unable to trap Jesus and try Him on the words He had spoken, they tried another ruse: they would make Him controvert the Mosaic Law. They brought a woman taken in adultery and challenged Jesus to lead them in stoning her according to the Law of Moses. While they accused, Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground. Presently He stood up and looked at the men. He took no issue with the Mosaic Law; He simply challenged the right of sinful man to execute sinners. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," He said. Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

One by one, the men who came to accuse slipped away, condemned each by his own conscience. From the eldest to the youngest, they all left. Then Jesus stood up again and addressed the woman, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She answered, "No man, Lord." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

By the time the woman had left, Jesus resumed His discourse in the temple court. As He spoke, occasionally He was interrupted by the Pharisees, who accused Him of bearing record of Himself, and, therefore, having no authority. Jesus answered that He bore witness of Himself and that the Father who sent Him also bore testimony concerning Him. He told the Jews that He would soon go away and they would seek for Him, that they would die in their sins and could not go where He was going. His hearers misunderstood Him. They wondered if He meant to commit suicide and that they could not follow Him in death. He answered their doubts by saying, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23).

The testimony of Jesus concerning Himself was substantiated by that of John the Baptist.

John, in preaching by the River Jordan declared (John 1:15) that the one coming after him was preferred before him, because He was before him. The forerunner came to announce the coming of the Messiah. Some of John's disciples mistook him for the Messiah, but John was vigorous in his affirmation that he was only the announcer. While preaching and baptizing in Jordan, John saw, on the banks of the stream, Jesus; and declared to his hearers: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Again the next day he pointed out Jesus, and some of his disciples followed the Lord.

The ministry of Jesus was growing popular. John's followers raised the question with John. The forerunner answered, "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all . . . he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3:30-34). There was no question in John's mind about Jesus being from above. It was the purpose of John's ministry to announce that the Messiah had come. The testimony of Nicodemus was to the effect that Jesus was not of this world but came from heaven. He said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him" (John 3:2).

The testimony of John, the beloved disciple, gives evidence through divine inspiration that Jesus came from above. The Gospel begins with that declaration, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

In the courts of the temple, Jesus continued His discourse before the multitude. Many of His hearers believed. Others wanted to argue. They claimed to be the seed of Abraham and questioned Jesus' authority to teach them. Declaring that Jesus' testimony concerning Himself was not true because it was one man's work, they were answered, "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me" (John 8:54). At this point His hearers were answering Jesus with a logic similar to His charge that they bore testimony concerning themselves and their testimony was not true. Jesus showed them that His testimony was true because He and the Father were one and their testimony was a joint witness.

In claiming to be Abraham's seed, the Jews were casting aspersion upon Jesus because He did not claim an earthly father but declared that God was His Father. Here Jesus had the opportunity to show His heavenly origin. He answered the sons of Abraham, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

Jesus told His hearers that if they were sons of Abraham surely they would rejoice in Him because Abraham, two thousand years before, had looked forward to the coming of Christ, and had rejoiced in His coming.

Had not David called Jesus, Lord? Jesus had asked the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41-46) what they thought of Christ. Some of them thought He was the son of David. This gave Him proper identity in the chronology. But Jesus fired a question at them, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord?"

In this, had David not recognized the eternity of Jesus when he called Him, Lord?

The Jews were not able to understand how the Lord could claim that Abraham had seen Christ's day and was glad, when Jesus was not yet fifty years old. How could He have known what Abraham thought? Jesus answered their bewilderment by declaring, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). It is difficult for the human mind to conceive the scope of that statement. Before David was, Jesus was; before Abraham was, Jesus was; before time began, Jesus was; after time shall have ended, Jesus will be.

Even as Moses had been encouraged to answer the doubting Israelites or the questioning Pharaoh concerning his authority by simply stating, "I Am, sent me," so Jesus declared His eternity in the two words "I am." When Jesus used the words "I am," He was ringing the bells of heaven. His "I am" echoed down the corridors of time far back into affinity and far forward beyond time into

eternity.

Indeed, it was Jesus who was identified in Revelation 13:8 as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” He was; He has been; He is; He will be forever.

The heavenly origin of Jesus and His place above are attested even in His death. While dying on the Cross for sinful man, Jesus voluntarily laid down His life and commended Himself back into the Father’s hands at the Father’s house: “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus gave His life a ransom for man. He voluntarily laid down His life for sinful man. He commended His spirit back into the Father’s hands.

Because Jesus had heavenly rights, He declared man’s duty. He issued the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) against the backdrop of divine authority. He said, “All power given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Because of this power and authority He has issued the commission to His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all men, promising His presence to those who obey His Command.

In the ascension (Luke 24:50-51) Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples. Then “he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

Jesus came from above. After His ministry of salvation, He went back to His heavenly home. He had a right to declare, “I am from above.” Those who believe in Him and accept Him as Saviour may enjoy His heavenly abode with Him.

04-I Am the Door

I Am the Door

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9).

It was shepherds to whom God first revealed the coming of the Messiah. Throughout the ministry of Christ the analogy of sheep, shepherds, and sheepcotes was common. The language was easily understood because of the universality of the occupation of shepherds. When Jesus spoke of Himself as the door of the sheep, He was on familiar ground with His hearers.

Jesus is the door. Note that He did not call Himself a door, but the door. There is no other. He is the entrance into the sheepfold. He is the door of the sheep. There is no other way.

Philosophers' doors are false openings leading to empty rooms. Whoever tries to find his own way without divine guidance will discover that he has entered an empty room where there is no light. There is nothing wrong with philosophy. There is nothing unreasonable about Jesus' claim to be the door. The philosopher who enters by means of the door of the sheep will find himself walking in the light and reasoning by the aid of divine logic.

There is the doorway of good deeds. Many try to enter into the kingdom through that door. It is a false door. No one is good enough to enter the kingdom. It is not possible for one to earn his way by good deeds.

Suppose you, at your present age, whether young or old, could begin at this point and never sin again. Suppose you fill your life with good deeds from now until the end of your life. Let your goodness be perfection. How much goodness could you accumulate to put over against the sins of your past to wipe out the sins you have committed?

It is not possible for one to gain a surplus of goodness to balance over against the evil of his past. Good deeds in the Christian are the outworking of an inner goodness which comes from Jesus Christ our Lord. Good deeds should always follow acceptance of Christ as the door to eternal life but they cannot earn salvation for us. The doorway of character is offered as a door of hope. Now character is important, but it is not an attainment, but it a gift from God through Jesus Christ. Christian character is a cloak of righteousness which is put on the believer by Christ. Then it becomes a fitting robe exemplifying the giver.

Character is what one is, rather than what one does. If the Christian honors the Lord and his Christian profession by a circumspect life and a character which is respected by those who know him, he is living the gospel. The nearer he lives to the giver of his new life, the finer his character and the more radiant his life.

E. Stanley Jones, the great missionary to India, was challenged by a Confucian when the missionary claimed salvation. Said the Confucian, “I would consider it egotistical to claim that I had

already attained salvation.” Stanley Jones answered, “So would I consider it egotistical to claim the attainment of salvation; but since my salvation is an obtainment and not an attainment, I do not consider it egotistical to claim that I have it. What has been given me, I know I have. My salvation is a gift from Christ.

There is quite a difference between attaining salvation by means of good works and obtaining salvation through the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ unto good works. Character is what one is. Christian character is what one allows Jesus to make of him through a dedicated life.

There is the false doorway of obedience.

God’s chosen people through the generations tried to keep the commandments. They were the best people who had ever lived. They were God’s people. Yet they were short of God’s will and purpose for mankind. In spite of their efforts to keep the law, the Israelites were disobedient children. Salvation by means of obedience to the law required that every jot and tittle of the law must be kept. There must be no violation even in part. This was impossible. So God sent His only Son into the world that He might redeem man. The law was a schoolmaster bringing people into the presence of Christ. Only through Him can full obedience to the law be effected.

There is a sense in which obedience is necessary in salvation. When Jesus offers an invitation to the lame to get up and walk, to the blind to open his eyes and see, to the sinner to repent and accept Him, obedience is necessary. Unless the lame man starts to get up, he will have no strength; unless the blind man opens his eyes, he cannot see; unless the sinner repents and acts upon his belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour, there is no salvation for him. Obedience in accepting the invitation of Christ is necessary if one is to receive the salvation which He offers. As the text declares, Jesus is “the door of the sheep.” They are His sheep. He knows them and calls them by name. From the foundation of the world it was God’s plan for Christ to come into the world and give His life a ransom for sinners. In the same plan which sent God’s Son into the world to die for sinful man, God chose His sheep. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are His sheep. He knows them. He calls them and they respond. He identifies them as His own. He presents them to the Father. As the shepherd stands in the door of the sheepcote counting in his sheep, so Christ is the door of the sheep counting in His redeemed. Only those who have trusted Him as Saviour are admitted into the sheepfold. They are the redeemed of the Lord. They are His.

Jesus speaks of that day when the sheep will be gathered together on the one hand and the goats on the other. Only the sheep, or the redeemed, will be admitted into the fold. The goats will be commanded to depart as the Lord will declare that He never knew them. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”

Jesus is the door of safety. To enter into the sheepfold through Jesus Christ as the door is to put Christ between us and temptation. There is the temptation to wander. One is heard to say, “I would be a Christian, but I am afraid I cannot hold out.” This is a mistaken notion about what it means to be a Christian. It does not mean that one must hold out. To be a Christian means that one is to surrender to Christ. He does the holding. He will protect His children from the temptation to wander and will keep them in His will. The Christian is not to hold out; he is to let Christ hold him. To enter through the door of safety means that the Christian puts Christ between him and life’s precipices. Life is beset with pitfalls. In every direction one goes he is likely to run into difficulties. Sheep on

the hills of Palestine were in constant danger of cliffs and precipices over which they might fall. Particularly were the lambs in the fold likely to feed too close to the edge and fall or be pushed off the cliffs to be wounded on the rocks below. Young Christians need the constant care of the Shepherd to provide safety for them by night all they enter in the sheepcote for safety, and by day as they feed upon the hills.

The analogy is carried further in the suggestion that the sheep are protected against ravaging wolves which would pounce upon them while feeding in the fields or slip into the sheepfold, except for the shepherd's care. The wolves of doubt and despair constantly beset the Christian. He must depend upon the door of safety to keep him from the thieves and robbers who would climb over the wall, or the wolves which would endanger his safety in the pasture.

He is also the door of plenty. Jesus said, "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Not only is He the door of safety; He is also the door of plenty. Whoever enters by that door will be free to go in and out, into safety and out to pasture.

It was this beautiful thought which led David to sing about the safety and security of the Lord. "I shall not want," he said. The Christian has not been promised all the material blessings he could enjoy, but he may be sure that he will have all that he needs and that what he does have will be for his good. He may trust the Lord for pasture. Green pastures and refreshing waters are the lot of the Christian.

Christ is the door of happiness. The pursuit of happiness is a common, but futile occupation. No one ever attained happiness by seeking it. It does not come that way. Happiness comes from complete trust in the Lord and full surrender to His will and plan.

Jesus tells us that life does not consist in the abundance of things which a man possesses. It is not how much of this world's goods or how well received one may be in business or social circles; happiness depends upon the security of faith in Christ and the assurance of being in His Will. Jesus gave the formula for happiness in the Beatitudes.

Jesus is the door of usefulness. People want to be needed; they want to be useful. There is no better way to fulfill that ambition than to surrender to Christ and be used of Him. Soul clinics and psychiatrists are kept busy by people who are frustrated and idle. On the other hand, some people are so busy with church work that they do not have time in be Christian. In our complex civilization, ministers find it necessary to learn counseling.

Christians need guidance. Those who are not Christian need first to enter through the door into the safety of Christ and then out through that same door into lives of usefulness. Christians who become frustrated should take time out to Commune with the Lord and seek His guidance. No one is really useful until he is of use to the Lord.

Christ is the door of prosperity. Real prosperity is measured by the spiritual. Men prosper as their souls prosper. Soul prosperity is the by-product of Christian guidance. The life which looks to Christ for direction will prosper in Him.

Jesus is the door of invitation. "Come," is a word often used by Jesus. "Come," He said to those who labor and are heavy laden. There is the promise of rest, the rest which Jesus will give and the rest which the one who comes will find. He invites all to take His teaching and learn His way and

find rest for their souls.

“Come,” said Jesus to the rich young ruler. That invitation to take up the cross and follow Jesus is open to everyone. Some, like the rich young ruler, will turn away because it costs too much. Others will fail to respond because it seems too simple. The invitation stands. Jesus invites young and old to come and follow Him.

- “Come,” he said to Simon Peter, and took him by the hand and lifted him up so he could walk on the water.

- “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile,” He invited His disciples. And He taught them. That same invitation is open to His followers today. We may enroll in the school of Jesus.

- “Come, ye blessed of my Father,” is the invitation to inherit all that the Father has in store for His children.

- “Suffer the little children to come,” He both encourages and commands.

“Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,” expresses the universality of the invitation of Christ; Let sinners come for salvation. Let saints come for encouragement. Whosoever will, let him come.

05-I Am the Good Shepherd

I Am the Good Shepherd In the same discourse in which Jesus called Himself the door, He expressed the type and meaning of His ministry in the claim, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

- As the door, He is entrance into the sheepfold, exit to shielded pastures, and protection from harm in the pasture.

- As the Good Shepherd, He is owner of the sheep, provider of their sustenance, and security for His sheep.

As David, the psalmist, sang of the Shepherd, he not only had in mind the Heavenly Father, but the promised Messiah. In Psalm 23, David gave a picture of the claim of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. THE GOOD SHEPHERD CARES FOR THE SHEEP

Sheep are called "dumb" animals. They seem to have no care for themselves. Why should they worry or fret? Why should they be uneasy? The Lord provides for them. If the children of the King could be as trusting as sheep and would follow as they, the Shepherd, there would be proper relationship between the Good Shepherd and His believers.

"I shall not want," says David, as he looks toward the Good Shepherd for his sustenance. What the Christian may need in food, clothing, and shelter, Jesus will provide. There may not be all the material things for which man may have a desire, but there will be a full supply of all the Christian needs. Paul put it this way, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Php 4:19). What more could be desired?

My friend was preaching under a brush arbor in the country. As a boy I heard him preach a sermon using the acrostic W-A-T-C-H. The words used were: Watch your "wants," your "actions," your "tongue," your "company," and your "hands." It was a good sermon.

The preacher suggested to his audience that if they were careful about their "wants" they might be happy in the Lord. If we want what the Lord wants us to have, we can be supremely happy in Him. He will provide every need the Christian has. THE GOOD SHEPHERD PROVIDES REST

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Rest is sometimes recess from labor. Rest in the Lord may be complete relaxation in the green pastures provided by the Good Shepherd. Rest may mean a change of work under the Lord's leadership; it may mean security in relief from pain; it means trust in the Lord: to the Christian, rest means leaving everything to the Lord. The lilies need not worry; they will be clothed. Christians may trust in the Lord and have full rest.

If the Christian will trust in the Lord for his sustenance, he will find the green pastures all about him.

In calling Himself the bread of life, Jesus also spoke of the refreshing water which makes for eternal life. David sang of such refreshing when he said, ". . . he leadeth me beside the still

waters.” The Christian hungers and thirsts after righteousness. As Jesus leads him beside the still waters, he may slake his thirst and be sure of the imputed righteousness of Christ. **THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS INSPIRATION**

“He restoreth my soul,” says David. In his daily communion with the Lord, the Christian will receive inspiration for every day’s living and for life ahead. As he walks in paths of righteousness, the Christian’s inspiration comes from Christ, for whose name’s sake he walks in correct paths. The presence of Christ gives him inspiration for righteous living. **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PROVIDES SECURITY**

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,” is security both here and hereafter. The Christian may be under the shadow of death, but Christ gives him the victory over death. The presence of Christ brings light: there can be no shadow when Jesus is there. He comes in under the clouds and dispels darkness. He is the light which “lighteth every man.” There is no need to fear when Jesus is present; He dispels our fears and inspires our hopes. **THE GOOD SHEPHERD GUIDES HIS SHEEP** The rod and the staff of the Lord comfort the Christian. Providing security now, the Lord provides leadership for tomorrow. If the young man would like to know how to cleanse his way, let him look to the Word of God. Jesus is the law of life for tomorrow. The Christian can find guidance for every day as he walks with Jesus. The teaching, the rod, the guide, the staff, these are ever present. The Christian who yields to the rod and staff of the Good Shepherd will walk in paths of peace and righteousness. He will be comforted in times of sorrow, guided in times of indecision, taught in times of wondering, and led in times of wandering.

There is victory for the sheep when the Shepherd provides. It matters not how many enemies the Christian may have, the Lord provides a table of contentment, fellowship, and consolation to those who are in His fold. The victory that overcomes the world is our faith, faith in the Good Shepherd. He is our all. **THE LORD CHOOSES HIS FOLLOWERS**

David sang about the anointing and the overflowing cup. The Lord chooses His followers and sets them apart in His service. The sheep do not choose the shepherd; the shepherd chooses the sheep. The calling, the anointing, the overflowing of blessings come from the Shepherd, whose supply is inexhaustible.

LOVE BEGETS LOVE The goodness and mercy of the Good Shepherd, given to His sheep, becomes a part of the trusting sheep. As Jesus manifests His love, His mercy, His grace, His goodness to His children, He lets them partake of His attributes. The Christian grows in the likeness of Christ. The sin of man broke the image of God; Christ restored that image in His children. Every virtue of the Good Shepherd becomes the heritage of His sheep. Care, concern, compassion, love, all these attributes of Christ expressed in guidance and security of believers, become a part of the believers themselves. To one another the followers of Christ become inspiration, comfort, and security.

Paul said, “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 13:12). He also said, “For we know in part,” yet he was sure that in Christ and through Christ we should know perfectly. What we see now is veiled by the shadow of ignorance and inexperience. What we shall learn through Christ will be perfection and consummation. **THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP**

Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." He calls each sheep by name. He admits each sheep individually. In the sheepfold are only those sheep who enter through the door, which is Christ. He calls each by name, and gives to each the security of the sheepfold.

Isn't it a wonderful thing to know that every believer in Christ has a new name by which he is identified as he enters by means of the door into the safety of the sheepfold? There is no question about his worthiness; he enters through the authority of Christ.

Many plans have been offered for salvation. Man has thought he could devise more equitable systems of justice and has offered many substitutes for the simple plan of salvation offered by Jesus. God's plan is so simple that wise men stumble over it, but simple shepherd folk are able to understand. The sheep goes in under the hand of the beckoning Shepherd. It is called by an individual name.

- Salvation is individual, not en masse.
- Entrance into the sheepfold is single, one by one, not as a group.
- Jesus calls each by name and admits His child into the safety of His kingdom.

As the shepherd knows his sheep, so is he known by them.

"I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine," Jesus said. The sheep look to the shepherd for sustenance, guidance, and security. The children of the Good Shepherd must look to Him for all the blessings of life. Through Christ the Christian lives, so that it is no longer he who lives but Christ lives in the believer. The Christian looks up to Jesus and trusts Him for all of life. His living, his influence, the blessings which are showered upon him, and the blessing which he may be to the world, the Christian owes to Christ. He lives less and less his own personal life and more and more the life of Christ. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP As John stated it, Jesus was saying, "I'm the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for His sheep." He said, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15).

There was perfect agreement between the Father and the Son that Jesus would lay down His life of His own accord. He was not forced into the sacrifice by the Father; He laid down His life of Himself. He declared that the Father loved Him because He was laying down His life that He might take it up again. He said, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it (up) again" (John 10:18). It was the plan of salvation. Father and Son agreed to the plan.

Laying down His life for His followers was not a matter of dying as a martyr to a good cause. Jesus not only died for the sins of man, He also died as the sin of man. He became sin and was crucified as sin to destroy sin that in the destruction of sin He might give life to His sheep.

The life Jesus laid down for His sheep was death in their stead. He died that men might not have to die for their sins. Also He died in order that He might give to His followers the new life. He died for a purpose. His sacrificial death was a life-giving sacrifice. All who believe in Him will escape death and inherit eternal life.

Jesus made quite a contrast between the hireling and the shepherd. The hireling became a shepherd for remuneration. He would flee to save his own life when danger impended. The Good Shepherd would give His life for the sheep. THE GOOD SHEPHERD HAS OTHER SHEEP The Jews could understand the analogy of the shepherd and his sheep.

- They were shepherds themselves.
- They could understand that the shepherd knew his sheep and the sheep knew their shepherd.
- They could comprehend the meaning of the shepherd's risking his life for his sheep as owner.

Jesus offered a new principle in mentioning "other sheep," not quite so understandable to His hearers.

Jesus said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my Voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

The other sheep must have referred to the Gentiles. It was not enough for the Saviour to lay down His life for one race, one chosen nation, a separate people. He gave His life "a ransom for many."

Outside the chosen nation were many people standing in need of salvation. The Heavenly Father and the only begotten Son had a plan for the salvation of the world, a plan comprehensive enough to embrace all mankind.

"For God so loved the (whole) world (all races), that he gave his only begotten Son (for the redemption of all mankind), that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Other sheep are in that "whosoever."

The new name given to believers in Christ may well be "whosoever." There is nothing to shut any race or nationality out of the plan of salvation. Jesus is the door. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the Only-begotten Son. He is the way of eternal life. He is the Shepherd of the sheep.

06-I Am the Resurrection

I Am the Resurrection

(John 11:25) When Mary and Martha sent for Jesus because of the desperate illness of their brother, Lazarus, Jesus delayed His response to their call. But after Lazarus had died, Jesus visited the sisters. Martha went out to meet Him in the way before He arrived at the home. Upon seeing Jesus she greeted Him with a rebuke for the Lord's delay in coming, but with the hope expressed in the word: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21). Anxious about her brother's condition, wearied with waiting on Lazarus, and grieved because of the passing of one she loved, Martha expressed it all in the mild rebuke, "if thou hadst been here."

Jesus assured Martha that her brother would live again. She responded that she knew he would live again in the resurrection at the last day. Did she correctly interpret what Jesus meant when He said, "Thy brother shall rise again?" Whether the Lord meant to tell Martha that He would raise Lazarus from the grave or to assure her of the resurrection is not clear in the context. When Martha spoke of the resurrection, Jesus immediately assured her that the way of the resurrection was through Jesus Christ.

Just as the way of salvation is by means of a person, so the resurrection is assured through the person of Jesus. It is not offered as a reward for good works or proper system of doctrine. It is interpreted as a personal promise from the person who is able to make the promise. The resurrection is through Jesus Christ our Lord: "I am the resurrection" (John 11:25).

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25), Jesus said. This is the true formula of life. It matters not whether the Christian be dead or alive so far as the flesh is concerned, he is alive through Jesus Christ. Whoever may be alive in the flesh without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is dead though he liveth. We are dead men without Christ.

In like manner Jesus gave Martha the assurance that "whomever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Then Jesus asked Martha if she believed what He said?

Do you believe it? The Christian has the assurance that he lives now and will forever. Death cannot stop his living. Paul expressed it perfectly when he reached the climax, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

Along with Paul, we can give thanks to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul expressed it in finality. There is nothing to fear in life or in death. Even death itself is swallowed up in victory.

Whoever believes in Jesus and takes Him at His word when He says, "I am the resurrection," has the assurance which Paul expressed in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which

is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul’s discussion had to do with the hopelessness of man in the flesh. He had said, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).

Then Paul started out upon the discussion which ended in the above assurance that nothing could separate the believer from the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From his exclamation about the wretchedness of man, Paul went into the ecstasy of Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The apostle must have had in mind the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus when the plan of salvation was given and the condemnation resulting from failure to believe in Jesus as the Christ (John 3:18), when he spoke so encouragingly concerning the freedom of the believer. He is not condemned for failing to believe because he believes, and there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Martha, do you believe this? Friend, do you believe it? This is the heart of the gospel. The resurrection is the hope of man.

The burning bush at Horeb startled Moses because it was not consumed in the flames. More astounding than the flaming bush was the fire that illumined the heart of Israel’s leader and the world’s outstanding general.

A blade of grass blushes in rainbow colors through the dew of a spring morning, not knowing it must hide beneath the winter snows and give place to a new sprig in a coming spring.

A bottle of peas, found in the grave of an Egyptian monarch, planted in the soil three thousand years later, sprang to life and bore fruit. Who can say that the Egyptian mummy is more than the shell in which eternal life was housed? A drop of water teaches its lesson of immortality. Under the microscope it is found to be a seething mass of living things. What becomes of it? It lifts as vapor and floats in the elements until some unseen force and inaudible voice converts it into rain. It falls upon the crest of the hill, unites with other raindrops, and flows in a rivulet to join a larger stream.

Singing and sparkling its reflection of the sky and overhanging trees, it dances merrily on over the falls, by sleeping villages, through farms and ranches, around eddies, by great cities into the ocean, making its contribution to the tolling waters of the eternal sea.

The poet sings: “Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll.” And another writes:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul;

While the swift seasons roll.

Let each new temple, nobler than the last, Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast Till thou at length art free Leaving thine out-grown shell By life’s unresting sea. From the dewdrop on the hill to the rolling sea is but a step in the course of eternity. The sea becomes vapor and joins the dewdrop in making rain.

The beautiful butterfly gracing the meadow was but yesterday a cocoon, and the other day only an ugly worm. Yet the silk of commerce, which enhances and adorns the human form, is the product of nature's transition from one form of life to another. Tomorrow there will be butterflies.

The pretty colors adorning the forest speak of immortality. The ripened fruit of the trees provides food for the animals of the forest; but here and there an acorn, bearing in its shell the essence of sylvan life, will evade the sharp teeth of the squirrel and hide under the leaves. Here it awaits the resurrection of spring and, responding to nature's call, will announce a century later that its fruit is for the propagation of life. The green of spring and the rainbow harmony of autumn both declare the reality of life.

There is in all these things a hint of everlasting life which fires the soul of man to look toward the eternal city whose builder and maker is God. From the helpless babe, reaching upward toward caressing hands, to tottering old age, leaning on the everlasting arms, there is a constant urge that lifts and leans and reaches to the immortal. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

The field of science bears its testimony to immortality. There is hardly a scientist of repute who will contend that the mind is subservient to the brain, that the thinking process is a mechanical operation of tissues alone. Rather it is the opinion of those who think, that the mind operates through the brain and that consciousness is more than mechanics. Are you house or tenant?

It is declared that the body is completely made over every seven years, but none will contend that the mind, the spirit, the personality, is entirely new. What becomes of thought? Is it not continuous? Does it not supersede?

Here one is reminded of the striking definition Dr. E. Y. Mullins gave to mind and matter: "What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind."

All science is constructed on the assumption that the universe is an order. If it is order, there is intelligence behind it, and man's position is elevated to that of the highest order. Scientists may explain mechanical processes and may reduce elements to atoms, but the respectful scientist stands with hat off and head bowed in the presence of the life which is behind the most extensive test of dissolution; for there is life.

"Philosophy comes to the rescue of the doctrine of immortality. Socrates reached his highest eloquence when he spoke of the Oracle within which was his guiding light and which he declared to be eternal. The universality of belief in the eternal existence of the soul has its weight on the side of immortality. Man does not instinctively and naturally believe that which is false. The desire which God has planted in the human breast that reaches out and up, gives evidence of the eternity of life.

By analogy the continuity of life is verified.

- The beetle leaves its hollow shell of an old house for a new; and the snake sheds its skin.
- The bird bursts from its outgrown shell and chirps joyfully in its new found life.

- The tadpole today breathes in water through gills: tomorrow it will breathe air through lungs as a frog.

From the caterpillar to the butterfly goes the process of life. From the maturing flower to the sprouting plant; from the swelling acorn to the spreading tree; from the little child to the mature man, one calling the other father-this is the analogy of life. Science, philosophy, and experience all together assert the indestructibility of matter.

If atoms cannot be destroyed, surely personality can persist. Hammer, heat, shake, electrify as you will, solids become liquids, liquids become gases, and gases explode; but the ultimate result is as the beginning. There are still atoms which proper processes could convert into original elements. If this is true of things, surely thoughts, emotions, personality will continue.

Again nature permits no waste. Plants grow, bear, die, fertilize the soil, and contribute to the sum total of existence. Is man less durable? If his physical body is composed of indestructible matter, how much more can we declare the permanence of his soul!

From the field of PSYCHOLOGY comes stronger evidence of immortality of the soul. By looking within man finds a thinking, emotional existence. Cogito ergo sum, declares the great thinker. "I think, therefore, I am."

It is impossible for one who thinks to imagine himself annihilated or conceive of his thoughts being completely obliterated. By observation of others one is convinced that there is life which cannot be seen, that there are thoughts beyond human explanation, that there is a summum bonum of existence which is beyond the capacity of the human mind to conceive.

A constantly enlarging vision makes one think of the beyond.

- The higher one climbs the farther he can see.
- The greater the progress, the broader the vision.
- The higher the reach, the wider the horizon-finite to infinite.

There is a soul instinct which is stronger even than the physical urges of hunger and self-preservation. There is a constant challenge for supremacy of spirit. There is that within man which rises to meet his Maker.

Immortality reaches its highest conception in Christianity. There is positive declaration from definite revelation that makes for immortality. Job answered, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Paul declared that One "hath brought life and immortality to light," and Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life," and again, "because I live ye shall live also."

The resurrection of Christ is the greatest proof of the immortality of the soul. Because there has been actual demonstration of immortality by the raising of one from the dead, there is proof that eternal life is possible. The proofs of Christ's resurrection are conclusive: the empty tomb . . . the ten appearances . . . the perfect life . . . predictions of prophets and Jesus . . . the lives of Christians.

The attributes of God as revealed to man, being eternal in nature, demand immortality.

Man is created in the image of God, not that his flesh and form are the physical reproduction of God, but the attributes of God are reflected in man.

- Holiness is not an achievement of man, but an investment of the divine.

- Truth is perfectly revealed only in Christ.

- Justice is administered in the world by men according to man's laws; but eternal justice can be administered only by God.

What justice man can exemplify in the world is the result of his likeness to God. God is expressed by the symbol of love. This is the perfect likeness of God. The first thing we seek to teach little children about God is His attribute of love.

It is the soul which loves and expresses the attributes of God. Because God has made man like Himself, man must live forever. Hands are lifted up to God in prayer: there is communion between earth and heaven. The eyes look heavenward: God looks down in love. Love reaches up to God: God reaches out to man in divine love. The soul persists.

07-I Am the Way

I Am the Way When Jesus was about to leave His disciples He delivered a farewell address. He encouraged the disciples to believe in Him as they believed in God that their hearts might not be troubled. Then He pointed them to the Father's house where, He declared, there are many dwelling places and to which He was going to prepare a place for His disciples. Thomas declared that the disciples did not know the way. This gave Jesus the opportunity to say in four words what He had spent three years trying to make clear to His disciples, "I am the way" (John 14:6). At the beginning of His ministry Jesus pointed out the two ways. He said to the multitude, as He addressed the disciples:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13-14). From this first picture of the two ways, the broad and the narrow, until the end of His ministry Jesus tried to point the disciples to the true way. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus not only pointed out the better of the two ways, but He warned His hearers about false prophets and false ways. He concluded the Sermon on the Mount with His description of the two builders, one building on the sand and the other building on the rock. The wise man found the narrow way and the solid rock.

Jesus is the way to the Father. Immediately after making the statement "I am the way," Jesus elaborated the meaning by saying, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He went on to say that if the disciples had known Him they would have known the Father also. It was for that purpose that Jesus came into the world. He wanted to introduce mankind to the Father. He came to present the Father to man. The way to the Father is through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the only way. Only as we know Him can we know God. He was God in the flesh after He was God in heaven. And He is God in heaven now, taking His place in the Godhead. At the time He was speaking to the disciples He was a member of the Godhead, even though He was a man in the flesh. He was both God and man.

Jesus declared to Philip, who wanted to be shown the Father, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Jesus is the way to the Father. He declared, "I and my Father are one." The disciples had found their way to Jesus. He was all they needed to know God the Father.

Jesus is the way of salvation. Men have tried many ways, but Jesus pointed out the narrow way. When He said to His disciples, who wanted to know the Father and wished to be shown the Father, that He was the way, He was answering once for all the question of the broad way and the narrow way. There is only one way to salvation. That is through Jesus Christ. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby man must be saved. Jesus is the only name.

It is interesting to study the many names given to Jesus both in prophecy and in His ministry. Among the names are: Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Wonderful, Counselor, Judge, Lawgiver,

King, King of kings, Lord, Lord of lords, Son, Only Begotten Son, Beloved, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, Babe, Child, Jesus, Saviour, Jesus Christ, Lord Jesus Christ, and Prince of Peace.

What the disciples called Jesus, was descriptive of what they thought of Him. For instance, after Thomas had been missing during the first appearance of Jesus to His disciples, he was doubtful and unhappy the whole week until the disciples met again in the upper room and Jesus appeared again. Upon seeing Jesus and hearing His voice with the invitation to examine the nail prints, Thomas cried out, "My Lord and my God." What better declaration of Jesus as Lord and Saviour than that!

I know of a world that is sunk in shame Whose hearts oft faint and tire: But I know of a name, a precious name That can set that world on fire.

I know a soul that is steeped in sin That no man's art can cure. But I know of a name, a precious name That can make that soul all pure.

I know of a life that is lost to God Bound down by things of earth: But I know of a name, a precious name, That can bring that soul new birth.

So, listen, my heart, an angel speaks To save thy life from dross:

Christ Jesus is the name, the name, He saves by the way of the cross.

Jesus is the way to success. Every man wants to succeed, but not every man knows what he wants by way of success. The Christian will be able to measure his success according to his devotion to Christ and his submission to the will of the Lord. God's way of measuring success should be man's way of achieving it. The true measure of success is in the prosperity of the soul.

Paul reached a high climax in his success experience when he was able to declare (Php 4:13) "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." This is real success. Whoever would succeed, let him measure his strength according to the ability of Christ.

Jesus is the way of happiness. The pursuit of happiness is the chief business of man. Not everyone finds the true formula for happiness or its source. Some seek it by way of joyful experiences. There may be happiness without joy; there is joy without happiness. Some try wealth. The poor and the wealthy may be happy; the rich and the poor may be unhappy. The wealth of man's possessions does not measure the wealth of his life. No, true happiness comes through finding God through Jesus Christ and surrendering to His will and way. Jesus is the way of happiness. Paul was able to express his formula for happiness by describing its source in these words, "For my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Jesus is the way to heaven. He called Himself the door. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the key to heaven. When He was leaving His disciples He described His future occupation by saying, "I go to prepare a place for you." There are many dwelling places in heaven. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His followers. When He has the place ready and has us ready for the place, He will come and receive us unto Himself. Jesus stands at the gate of heaven with hands outstretched toward His children in the world, saying, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

Jesus is the way out of darkness. When he said of Himself, "I am the light of the world," He was pointing the way out of darkness. Man gropes in the darkness of the world until he looks up and sees Jesus. Then he is able to walk by the light of heaven in the path of righteousness. Darkness is synonymous with ignorance. As Jesus is the way out of darkness, He is the way out of ignorance. Book learning is not necessarily intelligence or brilliance. The richest knowledge is of Christ. Many who are well educated according to worldly standards may be quite ignorant of Christ. The way out of darkness and ignorance is through Christ.

Jesus is the way out of sin. This is not exactly the same thing as saying that Jesus is the way of salvation. To repent of sin and to trust Jesus for salvation is the way of atonement. This is the way to get rid of past sin. Jesus is also the way out of the sinful life. The Christian will have less of sin in his life when he has more of Christ. He will be like Jesus when he walks in the way that Jesus points. This is the way out of the sins of the past and the sin that constantly besets one.

Jesus is the way out of bewilderment. The world is beset by confusion. Someone asked an oriental what his religion was, and he said it was Confucianism, but misspelled it "confusionism." It may be that Confucianism is confusion. It is true that our world is in confusion today. When has it not been? The way out of the wilderness is through Jesus Christ our Lord. If the leaders of the nations would look to Christ for direction and leadership, world conferences on the diplomatic level would reach better decisions. If in national and international affairs Jesus were recognized as Lord, the world would come out of its confusion. If in the individual life Jesus were recognized as Lord, confusion would be dispelled.

Jesus is the way out of selfishness. The only selfless living is through Jesus Christ. He lived the selfless life. His followers have walked in His train. The less of self there is in the Christian's life and the more of Jesus in it, the happier the Christian and the more useful to the Lord. Selfishness destroys family relationships. It undermines churches. It destroys businesses. Selfishness is a gross sin clothed in rich garments. Often it is not recognized for what it is until, like a cancer, it has eaten up the soul. Jesus lived for others; He would inspire His followers to do likewise. The way out of self is through Jesus. The Christian should so live that it is not he who lives but Christ living in him.

Jesus is the way out of timidity. The timid soul misses the fruits of dynamic living. When Jesus is in the life of the Christian, timidity is eliminated. It is no longer the individual seeking a place for himself, but a Christian seeking to honor his Lord.

I was a student secretary in the University of Alabama in the early days of the Inter-Board Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Frank Leavell, secretary of the commission, called on me in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Among other things, Frank said, "I have not seen in the Alabama Baptist anything about your work." My answer to Dr. Leavell was, "Do you think I am going to toot my own horn?" The Christian statesman replied, "John, you would not be telling about what you are doing, but you ought to let Alabama Baptists know what the Lord is doing through you in trying to reach the students of the University of Alabama for Him." Another experience of mine was in my call to the ministry. I was a timid country youth, who could not stand up to make a speech. I had tried to debate in school but could not speak. I had been called on to lead in prayer and had asked to be excused. When the Lord laid His hand upon me and called me into the ministry, He destroyed my timidity. He gave me the incentive and the inspiration to witness for

Him. This He will do for the Christian whom He calls on for his testimony.

Jesus is the way out of temptation. The Christian's life is beset by the tempter. Every direction in which he turns, Satan faces the Christian. What can be done about it? The way the Christian answers this dilemma will determine his usefulness in the Lord's service. Jesus overcame temptation. The three major temptations which are attractive to men were leveled at Jesus by Satan. In every instance, through dedication to the will of the Father and through prayer to His Heavenly Father, Jesus overcame the tempter. Even so, the Christian will be able to face every temptation that besets him when he builds a life of constant prayer. Living in the will of Christ means seeking His way for every day. Prayer will help to overcome temptation. Jesus is more ready to answer than the tempted Christian is to ask. Jesus is the way out and the way up. Will you walk in that way?

08-I Am the Truth

I Am the Truth At the Last Supper, Jesus and His disciples were in the most intimate relationships. The Lord had instituted the supper and had commanded His followers to commemorate His death. For three years He had been teaching the disciples that the consummation of His life would be His death on the Cross as redemption for mankind. He was speaking intimately about His going to the Father and leaving His ministry to His disciples. How little they had learned! They wanted to know where He was going; how He was going; and what the Father was like. They wanted to know the truth.

Jesus summed up His answer in the words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life . . ." (John 14:6). His three-in-one answer of the way, the truth and the life, was equally true in all respects. He was the way; the way was truth; and truth was life. He personified the way, the truth, and the life. The way was not a philosophy but a person. The truth was not a system of facts but a person. The life was not a promise of something to come but a person.

JESUS IS THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD When Jesus spoke of going to the Father and of none coming to the Father but by Him, Philip wanted the Lord to show the disciples the Father. That would be sufficient, he declared.

There was disappointment shown in the answer which Jesus gave: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Jesus had come into the world to reveal the Father to mankind. He had spent three years with the disciples. Philip wanted to know what the Father was like. Jesus manifested His disappointment in Philip, who had missed the revelation. Patiently, Jesus outlined it to the disciples again: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

The only way to reveal the Father to man was through a personality. The plan of salvation provided that revelation. The Father and the Son agreed upon their plan, and the Son came into the world to live in the flesh the life of the divine. Philip, can you believe, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John 14:10-11).

The highest truth is truth about God. The best revelation of that truth is through Jesus Christ the Lord. He came to reveal the Father. He is the truth.

JESUS IS THE TRUTH ABOUT KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is not necessarily wisdom. A person may store up a fund of knowledge and yet have no wisdom. Scientists have gone astray after half-truths. They have evolved philosophies and followed reasoning and logic to eternal doom. It is not enough to know facts: they must be known in relationship to God. The so-called scientist who says, "we can know absolutely nothing absolutely" needs personality in his knowledge. Relativity is a scientific principle; but the Christian

can reach proper relativity when he relates all truths to Christ.

Einstein declared, "The most beautiful thing we can express is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." His doctrine of relativity compared and contrasted things with things, facts with facts, knowledge with knowledge. He intimated that true relativity pointed to a higher power. The Christian does not need to intimate: he can assert. All truth is relative to Christ.

- Jesus is true fulfillment of all types in Old Testament Scriptures pointing to the Messiah.
- Jesus is the actuality of all the figures pointing heavenward.
- Jesus is the fulfillment of all the ceremonies which resemble actuality.

In other words Jesus is the whole truth of prophecy. He is the embodiment of truth. He is the true Messiah. In Him is the root of all knowledge. Real truth is in a person, and Jesus is that person.

The Mosaic Law was given as a schoolteacher to lead to the knowledge of Christ. John put it this way: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is truth at its best. It is the consummation of truth.

JESUS IS THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN

Jesus came into the world that He might reconcile the world to God. He came to earth in order that men might go to heaven. To those who believed on Him He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Jews were not able to understand what He meant about their being free when they never had been under bondage, they said. Jesus suggested to them that they were bond servants of sin. The only remedy for sin is Christ. So He said to them, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Jesus identified Himself as the way, the truth, the life, the door, the Good Shepherd, the Messiah, a king, as from above, the light, and the resurrection. All of these have to do with preparation for and entrance into heaven. The last discourse of Jesus before His crucifixion pointed the disciples to their eternal home.

He began by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1).

This is the key to heaven. Jesus is the door, the preparation, the consummation. He and the Father are as one. He is the perfect revelation of the Father, making heaven ready for His children, and His children ready for heaven.

What is heaven like? Jesus has answered that question by identifying its truth with His person. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said, as He promised that if He did go and prepare the place, He would come again and receive the disciples unto Himself. That makes heaven very personal. The reason for going to heaven is Jesus. The way to heaven is Jesus. The person whom the Christian expects to see in heaven is Jesus. He promised to return for His children, and to take them home with Him, "that where I am, there ye may be also," to put it in His words.

The physician was more than a medical doctor: he had a word for the soul. His patient said, "Doctor, I know I am going to die, and that I am going to heaven; but I am afraid. I wish I knew

what heaven is like, do you?"

The doctor's reply was a demonstration. "Do you hear that scratching on the door?" asked the doctor. "That is my dog. He does not know about a sick man in this room, about those beautiful flowers on the dresser; all he knows is that I am on this side of that door. I do not know about the streets of gold, the gates of pearl, or the tree of life in heaven, but I do know that Jesus is there and I want to be with Him."

Sunset and evening star, And one clear call for me! And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea. For such a tide as moving seems asleep, Too full for sound or foam; When
that which drew from out the boundless deep, Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell, And after that the dark; And may there be no sadness of farewell When I
embark. For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place, The flood may bear me far, I hope to
meet my Pilot face to face When I have crossed the bar.

09-I Am . . . Life

I Am . . . Life In presenting the great “I Am’s” of Jesus, one text has at least three sermons in it. In John 14:6, Jesus declares, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Each of the three words deserves a full discussion. THE ORIGIN OF LIFE In the beginning when God said “Let us make man,” He was making sure that there would be no misunderstanding about the origin of man. Whatever the scientist or the philosopher or the theologian can say about man’s origin, let it be verified by Genesis 1:26 or declared false. When God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life He was identifying man as a new kind of creation. One cannot go back of that declaration for the origin of man; neither can he change the truth of the declaration by his logic. God made man.

If there is any question about the Trinity, here, in the divine recordings of Holy Writ, is expressed the plurality of the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were together in the creation.

The agent in creation, who spoke the world into existence, was Christ. Under divine inspiration, John, the loyal, loving disciple of Jesus, gave full credit to Jesus in the act of creation. “Without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3), declared John. The Gospel of John begins very much like Genesis. “In the beginning,” is the opening phrase of each of the books. Genesis begins with “In the beginning God created.” John begins, “In the beginning was the Word.” It is the same statement. In John, the Word is Christ.

“Without him was not any thing made that was made,” John says. Then he enlarges upon the meaning of that statement. The worlds were spoken into existence. The stars were flung into space. Plant and animal life were created. Jesus had a right to say “I am . . . life.” He made the world and all that is in it. Then He made a higher form of life.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). If “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” John was speaking from divine inspiration when he verified the claim of Jesus that He was life. Not only did He give life to man, He also became man’s inspiration. The life which he received from Christ became the light of man.

We see not Jesus in the flesh, but we see Christ in the lives of men. He “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” THE NEW LIFE

Jesus came into a world beset by sin. He saw the best of men living in darkness, looking for light and life. Perhaps the best man that Jesus ever met, judged by moral standards, was Nicodemus. Yet it was to Nicodemus, the good man, a ruler of the Jews, a personable individual, as nearly perfect according to the law as a man might live, to whom Jesus said: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

This is the beginning of the new life. No matter how good one may be, he needs the new birth, as Jesus told Nicodemus. “Ye must be born again,” is the need of every man, good or bad. But to every man, good or bad, is the definite promise that if he will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as

his Saviour, he will have everlasting life.

God's provision for man's need offers salvation to every person who will accept His plan. I believe in the doctrine of election. God does elect those who will be saved. According to John 6:40, God has already voted for me. Now if I vote for Him, the election will be complete and I will be saved. God does not will the destruction of any. He offers His Son for the salvation of every man who will believe. He states it thus: And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life (John 6:40).

Paul was considered the greatest preacher of Christ. He was a practical theologian. In preaching the way of life, Paul reached a climax in Romans 6:23, when he declared, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The sinner is permitted to make his choice. He may receive the wages of sin in death; or he may accept the free gift of God through Christ and have eternal life. THE ABUNDANT LIFE When I was a boy, I was intrigued the first time I heard Dr. John R. Sampey, of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, make the statement, "He was saved by the skin of his teeth." Salvation is open to everyone who believes in Christ. But salvation is not the end of the Christian life: it is the beginning. Christ is not satisfied with simply a beginning when there should follow Christian growth. He wants the Christian to live fully, not meagerly.

For the abundant life, the Christian must look to Christ. He must become more like Christ. He must grow in Christ. For this reason, Jesus came into the world and gave His life. He came to ransom and to restore. He also came to make life worth living after the individual is redeemed. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Paul was able to say about his life, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The less of one's self and the more of Christ there is in one's life, the more abundant that life. The Christian is to partake of the personality of Christ, not just the sayings and commandments of Jesus. He is to grow in the likeness of Him who is the abundant life.

However, in the progress of the abundant life, the words of Jesus are important. The Holy Word, which is inspired, becomes a means to Christian growth. The Christian is to learn what the Bible says and to do what it commands. If he is really to live, he must know the mind of Christ. It is not strange, then, that Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are . . . life" (John 6:63).

The way of the abundant life is found in knowledge of the words of Christ, the way of Christ, and the will of Christ. The follower of Jesus will constantly be asking the question, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" The answer will come through the study of what Jesus said and the way He acted as well as in a surrender to His will and the seeking of His way through prayer.

The ministry of Jesus had grown popular because His sayings were different and His miracles were challenging. The things He did impressed the people so much that He was afraid they were following Him because of the miracles. He tried to turn their thinking from the miracle of things to the miracle of the spiritual relationship which He proclaimed. His spiritual teaching was not so popular. The crowds went away. With only His disciples left, Jesus turned to them and said, "Will ye also go away?"

We shall ever be grateful to Simon Peter, who was always ready with an answer. On this occasion the answer was perfect. He replied, "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). This was the right answer for the perfect life. He who would live abundantly would stay with Jesus for the words of eternal life and the way of the life abundant.

FRUITS OF THE NEW LIFE

Jesus would have those who are born again to live the abundant life in such a way that their lives will bear fruit. Christians ought to propagate themselves. One of the evidences of the new life is found in the new look, the new walk, the new conversation. The Christian should look like it and act like it. Paul put it this way:

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Christ, in giving us the new life, has set our feet on a new path. He has lifted our eyes to a new vision. He has centered our affection on a new world. Life has a different meaning. As the Christian enjoys the new life, he is preaching the gospel of grace. The love of God is shown in the life of the Christian. Those among whom he moves are impressed by the Christian's attitude, his conduct, his conversation. Buried with Christ into death, the Christian is raised with Christ into a new walk with Him.

Christian conduct is not a cloak which one wraps about himself but is the outward expression of an inner life. The glow of a radiant personality, the beaming of the Christian's facial expression, and the wholesome influence of the Christian's presence are all fruits of the new birth. A new radiance comes to life because of an inner spring which wells up and flows out in life-giving expression. Jesus pictured it in these words: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). Is it not the purpose of your Christian life to radiate a refreshing stream of enriching influence?

One of the evidences of the new life bears fruit in the fellowship of the saints. Christians have a new love for one another even as they have a new love for the world. Their love for the world is perfectly expressed in the compassion of Jesus as He looked out upon the world as sheep without a shepherd.

Love reaches out and down to the center even as it reaches out and up to God through Jesus Christ. John spoke of this evidence of the new life in 1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

There is a constant reminder that the Christian life does not consist in the abundance of things but in spiritual matters. Fruits of the Christian life are in spiritual conquest, not in material prosperity. In speaking of the rich man who looked out upon his harvest and his full barns and encouraged himself to eat and drink and be merry, Jesus raised the question ". . . then whose shall those things be . . ." after the deluded man's soul should have been required of him. Fruits of the Christian life are not in full barns but in the fullness of life through Christ.

SECURITY OF THE NEW LIFE

Much of life is spent in wrestling with the present for the security of tomorrow. Man is more concerned about his security in his later life than about his eternal security after this life is done. After all the plans of experts in economy and taxes are carried out, there still will be insecurity in this life. There is no way that man can be sure he will have plenty for his rainy day.

There is a security in the new life. John offered this assurance in his first epistle (1 John 5:12), "He that hath the Son hath life." The sinner is invited to lay hold on Christ. This, if he does it, is the beginning of security. From this point forward, it is not the Christian who holds on to Christ but Christ who does the holding.

Some fearful Christians live in mortal fear because they do not have the security which Christ offers. They have trusted Him as Saviour but are not sure that salvation is secure. They think security depends upon them instead of upon Him.

Be not fearful: Jesus has offered perfect security to those who will trust Him for salvation and depend upon Him for their security. Paul expresses it simply, but completely:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

You have trusted Christ for your salvation. Now trust Him for your security. Let your life be hid with Christ in God and be sure that He is able to fulfill His promise, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

10-I Am the True Vine

I Am the True Vine

Jesus was in the midst of His farewell address to the disciples. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me,” He began the address. Then He pointed to heaven where He was going to prepare a place for His followers. The very intimate discourse was so personal that it was reserved for the disciples after Judas had gone out.

Best known of New Testament passages, John 14 was spoken by the Lord at the table at the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Whether the analogy of the vine was a continuation of His table talk or was suggested by a vine by the path to Olivet is not known. It may be that Jesus was thinking about the fruit of the vine which was an emblem in the Lord’s Supper; or one of the disciples might have stumbled over a vine as the group moved up the slope to Olivet. It really does not matter. Jesus was speaking to a group thoroughly familiar with the vine and its culture. **THE VINE AND THE HUSBANDMAN**

Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1). The discourses of Jesus were couched in familiar illustrations. Just as He identified Himself with the almost-universal occupation of shepherding, He was on familiar ground here in speaking of the vine and its fruit.

In all the words of Jesus, He identified Himself with the Father. If He identified Himself with the vine, He must identify the Father as husbandman.

Christian growth is dependent upon cultivation. A vine left to itself will grow much wood but little fruit. It may even deteriorate into the bearing of inferior grapes. The cooperative effort of Father and Son is necessary for proper growth and fruitage. It is so with the growth of the individual Christian: it is so also with the extension of the kingdom. Cultivation is a divine aspect and is entirely in the hands of the Father. It is the husbandman who decides how the branches will be pruned. He will shape the vine and tend it. There will be no separation. It is a permanent union. This is a divine prerogative.

As it is the Father who determines true branches, it is He alone whose responsibility it is to prune the true branches and make them more fruitful. It is He alone who can determine the branches which appear on the vine but are not properly a part of the vine.

Fruit-bearing is the identifying characteristic. One branch goes to wood, another bears fruit. The one which is not properly identified with the vine and grows only wood, the Father cuts away. The branch which receives its life from the vine and bears fruit, He purges that it may bear more fruit. **THE CHRISTIAN IS THE BRANCH**

“I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5), Jesus said. There are two kinds of branches: the one which abides in Christ, and the one which does not. One of the branches “bringeth forth much fruit;” and the other, “. . . is cast forth as a branch, and is withered” (John 15:5-6).

What does the Christian have to do with his connection with the vine and his fruit-bearing? It is declared that the Father is the husbandman and determines which branches are true and which are false. Jesus declared, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. . . (John 15:5). This would indicate that while God the Father chooses the branches, there is responsibility on the part of the Christian who is chosen.

Jesus told His disciples that their responsibility for fruit-bearing was represented by their abiding in Him. Said He, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). The Christian receives his strength from Christ. He is purged by the Father. Fruit-bearing is his responsibility. He must abide in Christ and Christ must abide in him. To put it another way, the Christian must live more and more in and through Christ and less and less in and of himself. The Christian's fruit is dependent upon his dedication to the will of the Father and the life of Christ.

God wills that His children bear much fruit. In Christ there is enough life-giving strength for each Christian to bear fruit for the Master. Jesus is honored, the Christian is promoted, and the Father is glorified by fruit-bearing. The Lord declared: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8).

The way to glorify the Father in bearing much fruit is to abide in the love of Christ, even as He was in the love of the Father. Jesus put it, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

FRUIT IS THE PROOF OF DISCIPLESHIP In the Yearbook of American Churches for 1955, it was reported that church membership in the United States had climbed to 97,482,611 at the end of 1954. This means that 60.3 per cent of all Americans are members of churches. It has become popular in the United States to affiliate with churches. Does this mean real Christianity?

In Jesus' farewell address to His disciples, He set forth the distinguishing principles which identify Christians. A nominal "follower of Jesus," may be like the branch which yields no fruit. However, the Christian who bears fruit is living the real Christian life. Church membership does count. But no-account people may be church members.

On the other hand, it is not the responsibility of Christians to judge their neighbors. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the identifying characteristic. What are the fruits?

The fruits of the flesh are of one sort. It was left to Paul, the missionary theologian, to list the fruits of the flesh. One who is characterized by these fruits is certainly not abiding in the vine. How much of America is characterized by this fruit? What part of our civilization could be identified with these "works of the flesh"?

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

Perhaps many Americans are familiar with more of the above terms than with the identifying principles of Christian fruit-bearing. Paul identified the Christian with his fruit as follows: But the

fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

Let the Christian examine himself. He need not look upon the indifferent church members or the fruitless "followers." Self-examination will help improve the fruit of the Spirit.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

11-I Am the Son of Man

I Am the Son of Man “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matthew 16:13).

Jesus spoke of Himself as Son of Man. When He asked the disciples what others thought of Him, they replied that some said He was John the Baptist; some declared He was Elias; and others said He was Jeremias or one of the prophets. Concerned about what the disciples themselves thought, He pinpointed the question, and Simon Peter came up with the answer: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

This answer pleased Jesus. He had called Himself the Son of Man, but in identifying Himself as the Son of Man, He did not disavow His claim to be the Son of God.

Scribes and Pharisees challenged Jesus in the temple. They wanted to know of Him who He was. He answered that if He really told them, they would not believe, but He declared Himself to be the witness of the Father and that His witness, though of Himself, was true because His message was from the Father. He revealed His destiny by telling His enemies that where He was going they could not follow. They wondered whether He meant to commit suicide. He answered them in another statement in which He called Himself the Son of Man: “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he” (John 8:28).

Jesus had spoken the Parable of the Tares. His hearers did not understand; the disciples were confused. When the multitude had gone away, the followers of Jesus asked Him, “Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.” Jesus answered them, “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man” (Matthew 13:37).

On the occasion when Jesus and His disciples were passing through a cornfield on the Sabbath day and the disciples, because of their extreme hunger began to eat the raw grains and were severely criticized by the Pharisees, Jesus again spoke of Himself as the Son of Man. He declared, “For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day” (Matthew 12:8).

During the trial of Jesus before the high priest, in the last week of His earthly life, His accusers blindfolded Him and struck Him, demanding that He prophesy and tell who smote Him. They asked, trying to make Him blaspheme, “Art thou the Christ?”

Jesus summed up His earthly ministry and His heavenly glory in the statement: “Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Luke 22:69).

WHY DID JESUS CALL HIMSELF SON OF MAN?

Jesus called Himself Son of Man to identify Himself with mankind, whom He came into the world to redeem. While He was man, suffering human frailties and limitations voluntarily, yet He was the perfect man, never sinning, always in the perfect will of God.

He was humble. His beginning was as a babe; that is, His human beginning was that of a babe in humble surroundings. We are not able to subscribe to all the traditional miracles attributed to Him

in boyhood, the effort of some religionists to worship the image of the babe. It is true that He was perfect from the beginning of His earthly life. He grew from babyhood into childhood.

There is the beautiful story of His being as a boy in the temple in Jerusalem. He was brilliant, investigative, but completely subject to His parents. He grew normally from boyhood into manhood. He was man very man even though God very God.

Jesus was tempted. To be tempted does not mean to fall, but we are told very definitely that Jesus was tempted by Satan. The three outstanding temptations of man were faced by Jesus. Through prayer and purposive dedication He overcame temptation without yielding to sin.

He is our brother. Tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin, Jesus has traveled the path which man must travel. He has faced the problems His followers will face. He has gained the victory as a man over all the enemies of man's life. As our elder brother, Jesus has paved the way for us. The Son of Man blazed the trail which we are to follow.

CHRIST WAS NO RECLUSE

Jesus paid tribute to John the Baptist, a man of the wilderness, rough and aloof. The people had not been satisfied with John. Would they be satisfied with one making a different approach? To Jesus the people seemed as children playing in the streets. They had heard John the Baptist; now they were comparing Jesus with John. John had come neither eating nor drinking and the people had said, "He hath a devil."

"The Son of man came eating and drinking . . . a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19). None had called John the Baptist a friend; he was a rough preacher of repentance, challenging the people. Jesus was different. Though just as definite in His call to repentance, He manifested a compassion which had never been known. Because He came eating and drinking, He was called, and at the same time highly complimented, a "friend of publicans and sinners." Who but the Son of Man, with experience and understanding, could be called a "friend of sinners"?

It is comforting to Christians to think of Jesus in the ordinary circumstances of life. He ate, drank, became tired, sat on a well curb and rested, slept. Jesus, as Son of Man, is aware of man's weaknesses and sympathizes with his frailties.

- He does not condone sin in sinners, but seeks to relieve sinful man of his sinful ways.
- He does not overlook frailty in man but seeks to give man strength to walk in the true way.

Jesus came to fit men for this world as well as for the next. It is not enough for man to be equipped to live here; he must live hereafter. Neither is it enough for a man to be redeemed to a new life hereafter; the Christian has a life to live here in the world. Jesus came to set us an example.

- As He walked, so we should walk.
- As He talked, so we should talk.
- As He had compassion, so we should have sympathy for our fellowman.
- As He died to make men holy, we should live to make men free and happy.

- As Jesus ministered to men, so we are to be ministers of the good life.

He is our pattern: as He was, so we ought to be. Of Himself He said. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

JESUS WAS THE SECOND ADAM

There have been two Adams, sons of man and sons of God.

- The first Adam was made perfect; Jesus, the second Adam, was perfect.
- The first Adam was the first son of God; the second Adam was the Only-begotten Son of God.
- The first Adam was sinful; the second Adam was sinless.
- The first Adam disobeyed; the second Adam was in the perfect will of God.
- The first Adam was evil; the second Adam was good.
- The first Adam became imperfect; Jesus was perfect.
- The first Adam was sin-infecting; the second Adam was sin-destroying.
- The first Adam begot sinners; the second Adam redeemed from sin and set man's feet on a new path.

Dearest of all the statements identifying Himself as Son of Man is this: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11). Here Jesus completely identified Himself with the task which brought Him into the world. He came to save mankind.

Man is lost in his sin. In himself he cannot find the way out.

Although it is a popular approach to speak of man in his groping, looking up toward God, seeking a way of salvation, the picture Jesus gives of Himself is not so much that of answering man's call and helping man to find his way, but it is the spirit of a seeking Saviour searching for His lost sheep. The lost sheep is simply lost; it is not seeking the way home. The sinner is lost, and, whether he is seeking the Saviour or not, the Lord is looking for him. The seeking Saviour is the picture, not the groping, seeking sinner.

Jesus is not standing and simply waiting for the sinner to come to Him; He is on His way to the sinner, seeking to save that which was lost. Assuming all the responsibility of seeking, Jesus would make it easy for the sinner to find the Saviour.

Jesus is more eager to save than the sinner is to be saved. Look to Jesus now; believe in Him as Lord and Saviour; give Him your heart, He seeks it; give Him your life, He loves you.

12-I Am a King

I Am a King When Jesus was brought before Pilate to be tried, the greatest concern of Pilate was the charge of the Jews that Jesus made Himself a king. The governor asked the direct question, “Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king” (John 18:37). In the light of the modern way of expressing it, perhaps it would more clearly represent the emphasis if one were to say it as follows, “You said it; I am a king.”

The royalty of Jesus was divine. The “divine right of kings” is an assumption on the part of earthly royalty, but in the case of Jesus it was heavenly truth. He was king from the beginning. Reigning in heaven, He renounced His position for a time and became man in order that He might make princes and kings of mankind.

In the presence of Pilate, royalty was with the one being tried, instead of with the judge. Pilate enjoyed his position as governor by appointment from Rome. He was a puppet ruler, subject to higher authority. The power of life and death were in his hands, but he had only temporary authority in such matters. Jesus was a king from the beginning. He had power to create life, and sought to prolong it, not to take it.

Pilate thought he would rid himself of the responsibility of making a decision in the case of Jesus, so he sent Him to the court of Herod. Herod, as tetrarch of Galilee, was of higher rank than Pilate, and a king in his realm. Royalty had been in Herod’s family but a brief time. Jesus, a king from the foundation of the world, was being tried before puppet rulers.

In comparison with the kings of Israel, Jesus was in the line of royalty from the house of David. He was the lion of the tribe of Judah. Israel’s kings had been good and bad. Saul was not of royalty and his reign of forty years terminated his dynasty. Starting out brilliantly under the leadership of Samuel, Saul became impatient with divine authority and usurped the functions of priest as well as those of king. The displeasure of God made Saul miserable.

While Saul extended and strengthened the boundaries of the kingdom of Israel, he did so by the sufferance of God instead of in the will of God. Saul’s beginning was different from the end of his reign. Envy, jealousy, littleness, superstition, and sinfulness characterized Saul’s reign and sealed his doom.

David, a man after God’s own heart, was a king by divine right. God chose him and prospered him in his leadership of Israel. In his early reign David strengthened Israel’s leadership and ingratiated himself to the people. He was dearly loved and signally honored by the confidence and trust of his people.

David extended Israel’s boundaries and strengthened the nation’s stand among neighboring countries. Under his reign Israel enjoyed prosperity and progress.

David was a great sinner; but when he sinned he was sorry. He came back to God in humble repentance and full submission. The sons of David were princes. The Davidic line was divinely

approved as royalty. For generations the kings of Israel and Judah prospered as they followed the example of David.

Solomon was in many respects the greatest of the kings of Israel. He started off humbly and brilliantly with full reliance upon God. He further extended the influence of Israel until it became the outstanding nation of the world, not only during his forty years but throughout history. Solomon was a symbol of wisdom and brilliance. He was a king to be admired and followed.

And all the kings of the world have been men of human frailties in positions of great power with unlimited possibilities for good or evil. In all the kings there was good and there was evil.

Jesus was not only a king but the King of kings. He had no throne but the hearts of men. He had no armies, but His disciples are as numberless as the stars. He had no scepter but love, yet His scepter has been raised to the multitudes through centuries to bless men here and to give them assurance of the hereafter.

Jesus had no servants but His friends; yet men have counted themselves fortunate to be numbered among the servants of Christ. Jesus had no home but heaven. He had no place to lay His head but, through His ministry of suffering, He has made a place of rest for all the weary who will come to Him.

Jesus was King of truth. He told Pilate that if His kingdom had been of this world, he would have called legions to His rescue, but that His kingdom was not of this world. Pilate was confused. When Jesus stated that His kingdom was truth, Pilate wanted to know, "What is truth?"

There was no Gospel writer in the courtroom to write down the answer Jesus gave to Pilate. We wish we knew how He answered him in explaining what truth is. There is an answer which is satisfactory. He said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This should be enough for any of us. Jesus is the truth. Truth is a person, not a system of facts. Jesus is that person.

Jesus is King of justice. When He was tried before Pilate, Jesus was before a man who had no real conception of justice, Pilate declared to the Jews who brought Jesus in for trial, "I find no fault in Him." He knew that Jesus was innocent and wanted to discharge Him, but Pilate was afraid of the Jewish mob, and sought to appease the crowd. That was not justice.

When Jesus was before Herod, king of Galilee, Herod missed the miracle of royalty. In the presence of royalty, Herod humiliated the king. He missed the miracle of justice. Herod might have said the word which would have liberated Jesus, but he mocked the king and sent Him back to Pilate. Justice needs a just one to administer it.

Jesus as the king of justice knows what is right and will enlighten men who trust Him. A king of a world domain, who will seek to know Jesus and to follow His example, will be just in his dealings with his people. Only as the king approaches his duties in the spirit of Solomon, who prayed not for riches and honor and glory but for wisdom to judge the people, can a ruler administer justice properly. The king who looks to Jesus for an understanding of justice will deal righteously with his people.

Jesus is the king of love. The treatment Jesus received at the hand of the Jews was enough to make Him hate His people, but the love of Jesus towered over the injustice and inhumanity of the

Jews. He loved men in spite of themselves.

- The love of Jesus is the inspiration of His followers.
- His love is the foundation for justice and righteousness among rulers.
- His love is the power which begets man in the likeness of God.

The love of Jesus reaches out and down to sinners to save them and to empower them in witnessing for Christ.

Love conquers more enemies than soldiers can. Love opens more doors than battering-rams can burst open. Love opens doors of opportunity where money, influence, and power fail. To know the real meaning of the statement, "God is love," one must know Christ, who came to exemplify the love of God, to introduce the Father to mankind, to pay the price of man's sin, and to lift man into the presence of a loving Heavenly Father.

Jesus is King of kings. David looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. He was subject to the King of kings. Napoleon, in exile, paid tribute to the lowly Nazarene as a king with more armies than all the generals in the world, as a ruler without an earthly throne yet with more followers than all the kings of the world.

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. The kingdom of truth is broader than the geography of the world. It is deeper than the philosophy of men. The kingdom of truth extends beyond the generations of man. Truth is final. Jesus not only exemplifies it but He makes it. He not only enlightens men but He verifies information.

- The scientist never finds full truth until he can discover it through the eyes of Jesus.
- The philosopher will never find the answer until he finds it in Christ.
- The sinner will never learn the way until he submits to Jesus.

I was looking out over the Tennessee Valley at Chattanooga, Tennessee. From my elevation at Lookout Point, there was a haze over the valley.

I could see Chattanooga with its skyscrapers and the winding river pushing its way toward Muscle Shoals. I took a step to my right, and a panel of amber glass changed the color of the scene. Then I looked through blue-tinted glass, and the color was different. Then a green tint in the pane of glass made the valley look still different. Through several panes of glass with different color tints, I saw the same valley but differently. There was a slight shock when I stepped farther to my right to look through another pane of glass and discovered that the pane was a mirror. I saw myself.

When I think of that experience, I am brought face to face with the fact that:

- I never see the landscape properly until I see it through the eyes of Jesus.
- I never see man in the right perspective until I can share the compassion of Jesus!
- I am not able to get a picture of heaven until I can see it through the eyes of Jesus as He describes the heavenly home.

Jesus is the King of righteousness. Through the ages men have sought to please God. Some have cut their flesh and lashed their bodies in an effort to please God through physical suffering. Some have abased themselves and isolated themselves in the hope that they could please God through self-denial.

From the foundation of the world, God planned that man's way of righteousness should be the way of Christ. He sent His Son into the world that He might make men righteous. Only Jesus has the authority to put the robe of righteousness upon man. Men have called one another good or bad, but only Jesus can make them good.

As in the kingdom of truth, so in the kingdom of righteousness, it is a matter of person and not pretense, the acceptance of a person instead of a creed that makes men righteous.

When Christ is in the heart of a man, the man will grow into the likeness of Christ. The righteousness which is Christ will become the conduct and the character of man. Jesus is the King of Righteousness.

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