

The Christian

HIS DEFINITION

HIS HISTORY

HIS TITLES



By ALFRED P. GIBBS



FORT DODGE



IOWA, U. S. A.

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The Christian

A Scriptural Study of

HIS DEFINITION:

HIS HISTORY:

HIS TITLES.

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Introduction

This pamphlet attempts to set forth, simply, briefly and clearly, some Scriptural truths regarding the Christian.

They have designedly been cast into condensed form, and only those who are prepared to follow out, by personal study of the Bible, the suggestions made, will find them to be of any permanent spiritual profit.

There is no royal road to learning the truth of God. It can only come through prayerful, painstaking and persistent study of the holy Scriptures, plus prompt and whole hearted obedience to what is revealed therein.

These pages therefore should be read with the Bible at one's side, and all the Scripture passages, to which reference is made, should be looked up, "read, marked and inwardly digested."

Though the price of knowledge is admittedly high, it is well worth all the time, money and energy used to acquire it. The book of Proverbs, aptly called: "Laws of heaven for life on earth," is devoted to the extolling of the many excellences of knowledge and wisdom, and to describing the penalties which await those who are guilty of wilful ignorance. Read Proverbs 1:1-9, 20-23; 2:1-9; 3:1-26; 4:1-13.

Someone has given four good rules for effective Bible study. These rules are summarized by four little words: admit, submit, commit and transmit. By this is meant that the student must first admit

the truth of God into his mind by carefully reading what God has to say about the subject in question. Secondly, he must submit to whatever truth it reveals, and obey it, cost what it may. Thirdly, he must seek to commit what he has read and learned to memory, and by this fasten it indelibly upon his mind. This is not easy, but will prove to be a valuable investment, that will yield profitable dividends in the years to come. Finally, he should transmit this knowledge to others for, in so doing, it will not only become a blessing to others, but he himself shall be blessed in the doing of it. The Divine order is: "I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing." (Gen. 12:1-3).

With these things in mind, may it be yours and mine to pay good heed to the words of a great preacher and teacher of long ago who said: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God" (II Tim. 2:15).

We shall consider our subject under three main headings. First, *The definition of the Christian*, or what he is. Second, *The history of the Christian*, or how he became one. Third, *The titles of the Christian*, or how God describes him in His word.

These studies could be profitably used for a series of meetings for young believers; or for discussion groups at Summer Bible conferences and camps for young people.

THE CHRISTIAN

CHAPTER ONE

IT IS always wise, when discussing any subject, to define the meaning of the terms that are used. In this way, there will be no confusion of thought in the mind of the reader as to just exactly what the writer means when he uses certain expressions.

Hence we shall proceed at once to consider

1. THE DEFINITION OF THE CHRISTIAN,

or what is meant by the term, as found in the holy Scriptures. We shall think of two things under this heading: First, some of man's definitions of what the word "Christian" implies; and second, what God has to say about it in His word.

1. Some of man's definitions of a Christian.

It is hardly necessary to say that there is a wide divergence of opinion as to what a Christian really is. In response to the question: "What is a Christian?" there will be a multitude of different answers, each person sincerely believing his own answer to be correct. A perusal of the current literature of Christendom will only serve to add to the confusion. Amidst this babble of contradictory voices, which combine to "darken counsel by words without knowledge" (Job 38:2), the man in the street may be pardoned when he declares that he does not know what a Christian is!

Let us listen to four different voices, each of

which has its own explanation of what constitutes a Christian.

(1) *The voice of Christendom.*

By Christendom is meant the sum total of all those systems of religion that name the name of Christ, whether they be good, bad, or indifferent.

This voice loudly affirms that a Christian is one who has given his assent to the beliefs, or the creed, of his particular religious denomination, and has consequently submitted himself to the various rites, forms and ceremonies connected with its membership. In other words, he has given a mental assent to the creed; he has been baptized, confirmed, joined the Church, takes communion regularly, attends divine service faithfully, contributes his money to the cause, and is consequently termed: "a church member in good standing."

There are literally hundreds of thousands who come under this category. They honestly believe themselves to be Christians, merely because they have assented to certain doctrines, and passed through various ordinances. They know absolutely nothing of the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, which the Lord Jesus declared to be essential to either seeing or entering the kingdom of God. (John 3:3). They have never been led to see, and to take their place as lost and guilty sinners and, as such, to trust in the finished work of Christ, receive Him as their own personal Savior, and confess Him as the Lord of their life. They are tragically ignorant of God's free, full and eternal salvation, which Christ secured for sinners on the cross, and which alone fits a sinner for the presence and favor of a holy and sin-hating God.

(2) *The voice of the Moralist.*

This voice assures humanity that a Christian is one who endeavors honestly, sincerely and consistently, to do the best he can, to all the people he can, in all the ways he can, and as often as ever he can, and thus attempts to keep "the golden rule," which consists of doing unto others what he would like them to do to him.

There are very many such individuals, whose exemplary lives would put many professing Christians to shame by their morality of life, honesty of conduct, sincerity of aim, and consistency in well doing. But these, alas, are seeking to be Christians without Christ! They fit the description given by Paul of those who: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3).

These people, well meaning as they are, have utterly failed to realize that man cannot save himself by any efforts of his own. They seem unaware of the fact that, by seeking to merit God's favor on the basis of their own merits, they are virtually denying the necessity for the substitutionary sacrifice of the Son of God, and treating His work of redemption as a totally unnecessary thing, as far as they are concerned. This really represents an insult to God's wisdom, and to the whole Divine plan of salvation, purchased at such infinite cost. As well may a man lift himself by his own shoe straps, as a sinner, by his own merits, can lift himself into God's favor.

(3) *The voice of Modernism.*

This voice categorically denies the lost and ruined state of humanity by nature, and the consequent

necessity for Christ's redeeming blood to make salvation possible for the sinner.

Modernism asserts that all people are, by nature, the children of God, and that each person has within him a germ of divine life, which only requires self cultivation to bring to fruition. Thus the Christian life is viewed as an evolutionary process, in which each individual attains to a divine life by developing the forces which are within himself. According to this theory, each person becomes his own savior. Needless to say, Modernism both denies and ridicules the Divine inspiration and integrity of the holy Scriptures. In its place it loudly proclaims the theory of: "The universal Fatherhood of God, and the universal brotherhood of man."

There are thousands of such modernists today, and the tragedy is that many of them occupy supposedly Christian pulpits. From behind them they deny the very truths they promised to uphold and which they are paid to preach! These men fit the description given by our Lord to the religious leaders of His day, for they are but "Blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14).

(4) *The voice of Cultism.*

The past century has witnessed the rise of dozens of false cults, all claiming to be of Divine origin, and each appealing to the Scriptures for verification of its peculiar doctrines. Each of these cults will therefore define a Christian as one who accepts its own particular teachings, and seeks to spread its theories.

These cults are usually well organized, their doctrines cleverly stated and attractively propogated, and their adherents often more enthusiastic in

spreading their errors than Christians are in preaching the gospel of the grace of God! Thousands of people have been led astray by their “cunningly devised fables,” and thus, deceived and blinded by “the god of this age,” they sincerely but mistakenly imagine themselves to be Christians!

In the multitude of man-conceived theories and mis-interpreted Scriptures, God’s statement in I Cor. 2:14 is verified: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

CHAPTER TWO

HAVING examined some of man's definitions of a Christian, and seen their falsity; let us now consider *God's Definition of a Christian*.

2. God's Definition of a Christian.

In these studies, many Scripture passages will be indicated by book, chapter and verse. Each of these references should be turned to, read and examined with care. Only in this way shall this subject be of any real spiritual profit.

The actual word, "Christian," only occurs three times in the New Testament and, each time it is mentioned, a new aspect is presented and an added significance given to the term.

One of the rules governing Biblical interpretation is what is called: "The law of first mention." This affirms that the first mention of a word or term in the Bible determines its meaning throughout the rest of holy Scripture.

With this in mind, let us turn to Acts 11:19-26, where the word "Christian" is first mentioned (v. 26). In this passage, we discover that:

(1) *The Christian is defined*. Seven things are plainly indicated in this passage, and these combine to define what a Christian really is.

(a) *Proclamation*, vs. 19, 20. First comes the proclamation of the gospel. Note what was preached—"The Word," and "the Lord Jesus." In other words, the written Word and the living Word. They

did not preach a religion, a creed, a rite, a ceremony, a theory, or a denomination; but a *Person*, the Son of God, as revealed in the word of God. They proclaimed Him as the One Who had died for their sins and risen again. See I Cor. 15: 1-4. They preached forgiveness of sins through faith in Him (Acts 13: 38, 39). They realized that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" therefore the imperative need for them to preach the gospel. See Rom. 10: 13-17; I Cor. 1: 21; 9: 16-22; Mark 16: 15, 16. These disciples were thus obeying their Lord in proclaiming the gospel.

(b) *Demonstration*, v. 21, "And the hand of the Lord was with them." This indicates the manifestation of God's power which is made possible through the preaching of the gospel (Read Rom. 1: 16; I Cor. 1: 18; John 16: 18-24; I Thess. 1: 5). How worse than useless is that preaching which is unaccompanied by the Spirit's power! (Zech. 4: 6).

(c) *Acceptation*, v. 21, "a great number believed." Repentance toward God and faith in Christ is the only condition God puts on His salvation. These people believed the truth concerning their need as sinners and of God's provision for their need in the gospel of His grace. This led to their repentance, and issued in their reception of Christ as Savior. Repentance is a work inwrought by the Spirit of God, which causes the sinner to change his mind in regard to sin, self, the Savior and salvation. This change of mind produces a change of attitude, which issues in a change of action. See Luke 13: 3; Acts 17: 30, 31; Mark 1: 15; Heb. 4: 2; Acts 16: 31; John 3: 16; 5: 24.

(d) *Conversion*, v. 21, "turned unto the Lord." They turned to God *from* their idols, sins, etc. Note

the “to” and “from.” When the soul turns to the Lord, the idols are left behind (see Hos. 14: 8). Note also they “turned to the *Lord*.” The One to whom they had previously given no place in their lives, has now become the supreme Lord of their existence, and the Master of their service. See Rom. 10:9, 10; John 13:13, 14. It has been well said: “If He is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all!” See I Thess. 1:9, 10; compare Matt. 18:3.

(e) *Manifestation*, vs. 22, 23. “Seen the grace of God.” Since grace is a principle, how then can it be seen? Read Titus 2:11-14; Matt. 7:16-20; John 15:16; Phil. 1:20; Rom. 6:22. The new life in Christ always displays itself in terms of a life lived to the glory of God, the magnification of Christ, the demonstration of the Spirit’s power, the edification of believers, and the blessing of the unsaved. Without this manifestation of God’s saving grace, we may well doubt the reality of professed conversion. See Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46-49; Titus 3:8.

(f) *Edification*, v. 26, “They assembled themselves with the Church and taught.” These believers, or disciples, gathered together in assembly fellowship to be taught the Word, and thus were built up in their most holy faith, and grew in grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior. See II Pet. 3:18; Acts 20:32; Jude 20, 21; II Tim. 3:15, 16. God’s word anticipates and makes provision for the people of God gathering together for mutual edification and comfort (Matt. 18:20; Heb. 10:25). It is the teaching of the Word that builds up the people of God.

(g) *Designation*, v. 26. “The disciples were called Christians.” Note whom: the “disciples,” i. e. learners and followers of Christ.

From all this we can assuredly gather that a Christian is one who has heard the gospel and, by the Spirit of God, has been led to repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Having thus turned to the Lord, the believer manifests the reality of his conversion by a godly and consistent life before the world, and a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such a person, and none other, has the right to the name of *Christian*. Matthew Henry has tersely said: "I count him to be a Christian indeed who is neither ashamed of the gospel, nor a shame to the gospel." Let each reader search his heart and make absolutely certain that he is a genuine Christian in the Biblical sense of this term.

The next mention of the word "Christian," is in Acts 26:28, where we perceive:

(2) *The Christian is defied, or opposed.*

After Paul's eloquent and powerful presentation of his case to Agrippa (vs. 1-26), he appeals to him: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (v. 27). Note the response: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (v. 28). Agrippa knew what a Christian was, for he had met many, and was now face to face with the greatest Christian of all time! In spite of his inestimable privilege, he deliberately defied the great apostle and rejected the wonderful opportunity to become a Christian.

Thus the Christian is here described as witnessing to and pleading for his Lord, but opposed, ridiculed and rejected by the worldling. Let not the

Christian of today be unduly surprised when he finds himself faced by the same opposition, not only from political sources, but also from the power of organized religion.

The third and last mention of the term "Christian" is found in I Pet. 4:12-18. From this we see:

(3) *The Christian despised.* Here the close connection is seen between Christians and suffering. To be a Christian is to suffer. Notice the three words used.

(a) "*The fiery trial*" (v. 12), cp. I Pet. 1:6-9. God has not promised the Christian a path of ease and comfort through this world. He will be tried or tested. (See Acts 14:22; I Cor. 10:13; James 1:12; Heb. 11:32-40; II Thess. 1:4, 5).

(b) *Reproach* (v. 14), cp. Matt. 5:11, 12. Christ is still the despised and rejected One, and those who name His name must not expect to avoid His reproach (Isa. 53:3, 4; Matt. 10:24, 25; John 15:18-21; Heb. 11:26).

(c) *Suffering* (vs. 13, 16). Suffering for righteousness sake has ever been the lot of the people of God through all the ages. Let not any Christian expect to be exempt. It is still true that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
When others sought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?"

Read carefully I Pet. 2:19-23; 3-14; 5:10; II Tim. 2:9-12; John 16:33.

We have seen, from God's word, the definition of the term "Christian." Happy indeed is that one who, by the grace of God, through faith in the Son of God, regeneration by the Spirit of God, and the assurance of the word of God, can thus designate himself!

CHAPTER THREE

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S HISTORY.

Ephesians 2:1-12

WE HAVE noted in our first division, the scriptural definition of a Christian, or what constitutes him such. We shall now turn to the same authority of holy Scripture and discover the history of the Christian. That is, we shall see what he used to be, what he now is, and what has produced the change. In other words, we shall examine his past condition, his present position, and the procuring cause.

As the second chapter of Ephesians is read through several times, three main facts concerning the Christian will emerge.

1. His Past Condition (vs. 1-3).

This is seen in the words: "in times past," and "at that time" (vs. 11, 12). It is good to remember what we once were by nature. In fact, God urges us thus to do. (See Isa. 51:1; Eph. 2:11; Deut. 15:15; 8:10-18). We are asked to remember the pit out of which we were brought (Psalm 40:1-3); the quarry of sin from which we were taken (Isa. 51:1), the pollution from which we have been cleansed (I Cor. 6:9-11); the darkness out of which we have been called (Col. 1:13); the death from which we have passed (John 5:24); the slavery from which we have been liberated (Rom. 6:17, Luke 11:21, 22); and the doom from which we have been saved (II Cor. 1:10, I Thess. 1:10).

A remembrance of these things will keep us humble and cause us to sing:

“Naught have I gotten, but that I received,
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase,
I’m only a sinner, saved by grace!”

Now let us look at these three verses, which so vividly remind us of our black past.

(1) *Dead in sins* (v.). Death always means separation, and is seen in three aspects of man by nature. *Physical death* is the separation of the spirit of man from his body (James 2:26). *Spiritual death* is the separation of the spirit in man from the life of God. (See Gen. 2:17; 3:8; Eph. 4:18). The *second death* is the eternal fixation of this condition of separation from God. (Rev. 20:14).

By nature, man is separated from God because of sin. (See Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; Isa. 53:6; Luke 15:24; I Tim. 5:6). He is said to have no life, i. e., spiritual life, the life of God. (See I John 5:12). As Christ is the source of spiritual life, therefore to be without Christ is to be without spiritual life (John 1:5; Eph. 2:12).

The sinner is described as being helpless to save himself (Rom. 5:6). What he needs is that spiritual life which comes through a new birth, if ever he is to be a Christian. (See John 10:10; 3:3; II Cor. 5:17).

(2) *Depraved through sin* (v. 2), “Walked according to the course of this world.” Man, by nature, follows the trend, current, bias, or bent of this age, or world-system. The Bible’s description of the world is not calculated to inflate its ego. We are told it has (a) Satan for its god (II Cor. 4:4); (b)

Self-gratification as its aim (I John 2:15, 16); (c) Pleasure as its occupation (II Tim. 3:4); (d) Human wisdom as its authority (I Cor. 1:19-24; 2:6-8); (e) Time as its sphere (Gal. 1:4); (f) Unbelief as its characteristic (John 16:8, 9); and (g) Judgment as its doom (Acts 17:31). This is the "course of this world," or age, for which unregenerate men now live.

(3) *Deceived by Satan*, v. 2b. "The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Let no one doubt the reality, wisdom and authority of Satan. See John 8:44, 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; II Cor. 4:4. The Devil's great desire is to counterfeit the work of God, and to lull men into a sense of false security by causing them to rest, in smug self-complacency, in their own righteousness, culture and religion. See II Cor. 11:3-4, 14-15. The sinner, blinded, deceived and led by Satan, either ignores, despises or flatly rejects God's statements, pleadings and warnings.

(4) *Disobedient to God*, v. 2c. "Children of disobedience." See also Titus 3:3; Eph. 5:6. By nature man is both disobedient to God's will and God's way. See John 5:40; Matt. 22:37; Prov. 1:20-31; Isa. 42:24, 55:8, 53:6; Rom. 3:12; II Pet. 2:21. He is described as being at enmity with God, and as a rebel against the authority of God (Rom. 8:5-8).

(5) *Defiled by sin*, v. 3a. "Fulfilling the desires of the flesh." What a tragic picture God gives of unregenerate man! He is seen gratifying the lusts of a fallen nature; saying and doing what he pleases, and going where he pleases; and thus living a life of self-expression and sinful indulgence. Man can sink lower than any brute beast in this respect. See Jer.

17:9, 10; Mark 7:20-23; Psa. 14:2, 3; Job 15:16; 9:30, 31; 40:4; Isa. 64:6. By the term "the flesh," in this sense, is meant that principle of enmity against God which we all received by nature (John 3:6; Rom. 8:5-9).

(6) *Darkened in mind*, v. 3b. "And of the mind." Man, by nature, cannot think straight along spiritual lines. His mind has become warped, his intellect darkened, and his moral nature twisted. He is therefore incapable of comprehending spiritual truth, because such things are "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). By the term "the total depravity of man," is meant man's incapacity to appreciate, or understand spiritual things. See also Eph. 4:18; Isa. 43:8; Matt. 15:14; Rev. 3:17; I John 2:11; John 12:35, 36; Col. 2:13; John 1:5; 3:19, 20; Rom. 1:21, 22.

(7) *Doomed to eternal wrath*, v. 3c. "By nature the children of wrath." (Note, not by nature the children of God). Man's sin merits the just and righteous judgment of God upon him. Because of His holiness, God must punish sin and the sinner. See Rom. 1:18; Ezek. 18:4; II Thess. 1:7, 8; Jude 14:15; Mark 16:16; John 3:36. While man, by nature is *doomed*, yet, thank God, he is not yet *damned*. God does not will his damnation, but his *salvation* (Ezek. 33:11). Damnation is the carrying out of the sentence of eternal banishment from the presence and favor of God. This is the doom of the sinner who rejects God's offer of mercy and despises the Savior, through Whom alone this salvation can be found.

We have seen, from the word of God, that man, by nature, is spiritually dead, needing regeneration; depraved, needing restoration; deceived, needing di-

rection; disobedient, needing forgiveness; defiled, needing cleansing; darkened, needing illumination; and doomed, needing deliverance. Truly this is a black picture and, as far as man is concerned, unrelieved by one ray of light to illumine the abysmal gloom! If ever the sinner is to be delivered from this dreadful condition, then he is shut up to God alone.

CHAPTER FOUR

HAVING discussed the Christian's black past, let us now look at:

2. His Present Position (Eph. 2:1-22).

This is seen in the words: "but God," "but now" (vs. 4, 13). Paul now goes on to show the great things that the God of all grace has made possible for every lost and guilty sinner.

(1) *He is described as being regenerated, v. 1.* "Quickened." That is, he has been made alive. By this is meant the impartation of spiritual life to the Christian, by the Spirit of God, upon the sinner's belief of the truth, repentance towards God, and acceptance of Christ as his own personal Savior. See John 3:3, 14, 15; Eph. 1:13; I Pet. 1:23. This spiritual life was made:

(a) Possible, by God's gift of His Son. See John 3:16.

(b) Actual, by the death of Christ. See John 10:10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 27-30; Mark 10:45; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 6:10; John 12:24.

(c) Available, through the word of God. See John 6:63; 5:24, 25; Heb. 4:12; I Thess. 2:13; Rom. 1:16; I Pet. 1:23.

(d) Experimnetal, by the Holy Spirit's power See Eph. 1:13; John 3:5; Rom. 8:9-16; I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 6:19, 20; Eph. 4:30.

(2) *He is said to be saved, vs. 5, 8, i. e. delivered. Salvation is an inclusive term, and has a past, present and future application. See II Cor. 1:10.*

(a) We have been saved from sin's doom—eternal death—by the death of Christ. See Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:31; Rom. 8:1; 5:1; Rom. 4:24, 25.

(b) We are being saved from sin's dominion by the ceaseless intercession of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. See Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:16-26; Heb. 7:25; Titus 2:12-14. In the measure in which we are occupied with Christ, allow the Spirit of God to dwell ungrieved within us, and walk in obedience to God's word; in that degree we shall experience daily deliverance from sin's control in our lives.

(c) We shall yet be saved from sin's domain and its possibility at the coming of Christ. At His second advent, we shall be removed from its very presence. See Rom. 13:11; 8:18-25; I Thess. 4:13-18; 5:9, 10; I Cor. 15:50-57; Phil. 3:20, 21. Note the five great facts in v. 8. The *source* of salvation: "by grace." Its *certainty*: "are." Its *objects*: "ye." Its *content*: "saved." Its *medium* "through faith."

(3) *He is spoken of as being secure, vs. 6, 7.*

(a) "In Christ." This is the key word of this epistle, and denotes the secret of all the believer's blessedness. See Eph. 1:3, 4, 6, 7, 11-14, etc. In fact this phrase occurs thirty-five times in Ephesians alone. It emphasizes the fact that we are eternally identified with Christ. We are in Him as to our sphere of life. See also I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:1; I Cor. 6:11; I John 4:17; Col. 3:3.

(b) "Raised with Christ." As Christ's death was our death, so His resurrection is ours also (Rom.

6:3-9; 7:4). We share, with Him, a life beyond the power of the grave.

The hymn writer has beautifully expressed it:

“For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou art ris’n, my bonds are all untied
And now I live in Thee!”

(c) “Seated in Christ.” In God’s eternal purposes we are viewed as already in heaven. We are told that “God calleth those things which be not as though they were.” God dwells in an eternal present, for “known unto Him are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Rom. 4:17; Acts 15:18). Note also that God speaks of the glorification of the believer in the *past tense*. See Rom. 8:29-31.

(d) To be glorified with Christ, v. 7. “The ages to come” will provide God with the opportunity of displaying to His blood-bought people “the exceeding riches of His grace.” What a glorious prospect awaits the child of God! See also Rom. 8:17,18; Phil. 3:21.

(4) *He is referred to as God’s workmanship.* v. 10, Literally, God’s “poem.” The Christian proves he is God’s workmanship by the kind of life he lives before the world. This life is characterized by good works. The world confuses the effect with the cause. Good works are not the *cause* of salvation, but the *effect*. The Christian does not work in *order to be saved*, but he works *because* he is saved. He does not seek to live the Christian life in order to *become* a Christian, but because he *is* a Christian. Works do not justify a man before God, but the believer simply proves the reality of his faith by his

works. See Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:9; James 2:14-18. We are told in the Bible that good works are:

(a) Ordained by God (Eph. 2:10).

(b) Commanded by Christ (Matt. 5:16).

(c) Emphasized by the apostles (Titus 3:8; I Pet. 2:12; James 2:14-18; Gal. 6:10; Col. 3:23).

(d) Energized by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 1:29).

(e) Rewarded by the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:24); Eph. 6:8).

(4) *He is described as being reconciled to God, vs. 13-17.* From vs. 11-17 the apostle describes the position of the Gentiles as outside the commonwealth of Israel. Note v. 4, and v. 13, "but God," "but now." What a contrast! The sinner by nature is "afar off," (i) by birth (Eph. 2:13). (ii) By choice (Luke 15:13). (iii) By confession (Luke 18:13). (iv) By judgment (Rev. 18:10). (v) For eternity (Luke 16:23). The saint, by grace, is now "made nigh," and reconciled. See Col. 1:21; II Cor. 5:19; Luke 15:17-24. Peace is the result of this reconciliation to God. v. 17, Rom. 5:1. Nothing can disturb this peace between each believer and the God of heaven.

(5) *He is said to have access to the Father, v. 18.* Note the reference here to the trinity of the Godhead. (See also Matt. 3:16, 17; John 15:26; 16:15; Heb. 9:14.

(a) This access has been made by the Son of God. See John 10:9; Heb. 9:12; John 14:6; Heb. 4:14; Rom. 5:1, 2.

(b) The invitation to draw near is now extended to every believer. See Heb. 10:19-22; 4:16.

(c) The wondrous provision this access affords (Heb. 4:16). "Mercy" for the past, "grace" for the present. See also John 14:13, 14; Eph. 3:20, 21; Matt. 6:6; II Cor. 12:9; James 4:3; I John 5:14, 15; John 15:7.

(6) *He is said to belong to the household of God, vs. 19-22.* Note the three similes that are used here to describe the Christian.

(a) A citizen, v. 19, with all the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in the kingdom of God (Phil. 3:20). "Conversation" here means citizenship.

(b) A member of the household of God, v. 19. Born into the family of God, to be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty! From slavery to sonship! From the far country to the Father's house! What infinite grace has made all this possible! (Gal. 4:6, 7; I John 3:1, 2; John 1:12; Rom. 8:15-17).

(c) A part of the temple of God, vs. 21, 22. He is a "living stone" in this holy temple. See I Pet. 2:5. The believer has been taken from the quarry of sin, to be built into the temple of God! (Isaiah 51:1).

"View the vast building, see it rise;
The work, how great! the plan, how wise!
O wondrous fabric! power unknown,
That rests it on the 'Living Stone.'"

Thus God sets before us the present condition of every child of God.

CHAPTER FIVE

WE HAVE noted the Christian's past and his present position. Now let us consider:

3. **The Procuring Cause**, by which all this has been made possible. This cause, or origin of our salvation is threefold, the triune Godhead being concerned. See Eph. 1: 6, 12, 14.

(1) *The love of the Father* (Eph. 2:4). Love is the essence of God's being (I John 4:8). *Why* God set His love upon us, we shall never know, but that He *did*, is cause for endless praise. As the poet has said:

"That Thou shouldst love a wretch like me,
And be the God Thou art;
Is darkness to my intellect, ,
But sunshine to my heart!"

This love is revealed in at least a sevenfold way in Scripture. It is described as:

(a) A proclaimed love (John 3:16). This love was made known by none other than the eternal Son of God Himself.

(b) A manifested love (I John 4:9). God has left mankind in no doubt of His love. The gift of His Son and Christ's work on the cross has demonstrated this love beyond all possibility of contradiction.

(c) A commended love (Rom. 5:7, 8). God, in His grace, and in perfect consistency with His righteousness, holiness and justice, now commends His

love to rebellious man, and pleads with him to believe Him and to trust in His Son.

(d) A bestowed love (I John 3:1). The believing sinner, upon his acceptance of Christ as Savior, and confession of Him as Lord of his life, is now constituted a child of God with all the privileges that this relationship implies.

(e) An experienced love (I John 4:16). This love is now appreciated, in ever increasing measure, by the believer. It gives him boldness to come into the presence of his Father in heaven, for God's perfect love has cast out all fear and dread (I John 4:18).

(f) A reciprocated love (I John 4:19). From the Christian's heart, there now flows up adoration, praise and worship to the One whose matchless love has made all these blessings actual in his experience.

(g) A motivating love (I John 4:11; 3:16; II Cor. 5:14). This love now becomes the motivating principle of all his service for God. God's love has been *shed* abroad, in his heart, to be *spread* abroad, from his heart, in self sacrificial service for Him (Rom. 5:5).

(2) *The blood, or death of the Son*, v. 13. While the love of the Father made this salvation *possible*, the vicarious and substitutionary sacrifice of Christ made it *available*. This substitutionary work of Christ was:

(a) Required (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). The law, which Christ came to fulfil (Matt. 5:17), demanded either the death of the sinner, or the death of a Divinely appointed and Divinely competent sub-

stitute which should be accepted in his stead. (See Lev. 1:4).

(b) Given (Mark 10:45; John 10:17, 18; Heb. 9:12; Titus 2:14). Christ has left men in no doubt as to the object of His incarnation, life and death. He came to magnify the law in His life, and meet all its requirements in His death; so that a perfect salvation might be provided for every believing sinner. Because of Christ's willing, spotless and substitutionary sacrifice of Himself, God can now be just and, at the same time, the Justifier of every one who believes in Jesus.

(c) Accepted by God (Acts 2:22, 32-33; 17:31; 10:38-40; Rom. 4:24, 25). How do we know that the sacrifice Christ made on Calvary has been accepted by God? The victorious resurrection of the Son of God is the answer. The resurrection of Christ is God's "Amen" to Christ's, "It is finished!" Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

(d) Trusted (Eph. 1:13; I Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 2:20). The Gospel is not good *advice*, but good *news*; the hearing and believing of which results in the salvation of the believer (Rom. 10:17). Happy indeed is that person who makes the death of Christ the sole basis of his hope for eternity.

(e) Preached. See the book of Acts. As we read the sermons recorded in the Acts, we will be impressed with the fact that these sermons consist largely of the stating of the facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection and glorification. On the basis of these facts, the audience was urged to repent, receive God's Son as Savior, and acknowledge Him as

Lord of the life. This witness to Christ's Person and work was the responsibility of each believer (Acts 1:8).

(3) *The power of the Holy Spirit*, vs. 1, 18, 22. While the love of the Father made salvation *possible*, and the death of the Son made it available; it is the Person and work of the Holy Spirit that makes it *experimental*, or actual in the life of the believer. Apart from the Spirit of God, there can be no experience of salvation. The work of the Spirit is seen in many ways. Let us look at a few.

(a) *Convicting* (John 16:8; Acts 2:37). To convict is to "satisfy by evidence." The Spirit takes the word of God and, through its evidence, satisfies the hearer of its truth and authority. Thus the sinner is awakened to a realization of his true state as lost and guilty before God.

(b) *Applying* (I Pet. 1:12; I Cor. 2:4). The Spirit then occupies the hearer with the person and work of Christ, and leads him to own his lost condition and place his confidence in the sacrifice of Christ as the sole basis of eternal blessedness. Thus He leads the sinner to Christ.

(c) *Indwelling* (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Gal. 5:22-23). The moment the sinner trusts in Christ as his own Savior, the Spirit indwells him and imparts to him a Divine nature, in the power of which he is enabled to live a life to the glory of God.

(d) *Sealing* (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). By this indwelling, the Spirit marks out the believer as "the purchased possession" of Christ. Sealing signifies ownership and security.

(e) *Leading* (John 16:13-15; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18). The Spirit now uses the word of God to guide the believer into all truth, and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(f) *Empowering* (Acts 1:8). The Spirit's presence within the believer, providing He is ungrieved, enables the Christian not only to live a life well pleasing to God, but to serve Him effectually as a witness and soul winner. (Eph. 4:30).

May it be ours, having viewed the black *past*, realized the blessed *present*, and sensed the glorious *future* of the Christian, to live to the praise of the glory of the grace of the Father who made it possible, the Son who made it available, and the Holy Spirit who made it experimental! (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14).

CHAPTER SIX

III. HIS TITLES

WE HAVE looked at the Christian's definition and his history. Let us now examine, with our Bibles open before us, some of the titles which God gives to those who are in Christ, and carefully mark their spiritual significance. We will begin with the most familiar.

1. "Christians."

They are thus termed because of their *Owner*. See Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16. Christians are said to belong to Christ. See Mark 9:41; I Cor. 3:23; Rom. 14:8; I Cor. 6:19, 20; Isa. 43:1. Just as an Italian is one who belongs to Italy, an American, one who belongs to America, so a Christian is one who belongs to Christ, and no one else has any right to this title. A seven-fold bond unites every Christian to Christ as His eternal possession, and this bond is absolutely unbreakable. Let us spend a little time examining the links of the golden chain that unite each believer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1) *He is Christ's by Presentation*. See John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24. In these verses, found in the Lord's prayer on the eve of Calvary, Christ declared, seven times, that His disciples were His because they had been given to Him by His Father. Note carefully the phrase: "Those whom Thou hast given Me." We shall notice three things regarding this presentation.

(a) *The period of this gift*. See Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29-31; I Pet. 1:2; II Thess. 2:13. Before the worlds

were framed by the word of God and swung into space to follow their predestined orbits, we were chosen in Christ! This is indeed a wondrous thought and, better still, a stupendous fact. The believer will need to firmly grasp the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination, for it will stand him in good stead through all the vicissitudes of his Christian experience.

These scriptures introduce us into the realm of the sovereignty of God. By this is meant the prerogative of Deity to do as He pleases. See Isa. 40:26, 29; 41:22, 23; 43:13. Man was not consulted in regard to this choice, nor was his permission asked. God, of His own sovereign will, decreed and declared it. Let us believe it with all our hearts and never cease to thank Him for it!

But God's word, with equal clarity, reveals the freedom of man's will to choose, or to reject His Son and His salvation. See John 3:16; Acts 16:31; John 7:17; 5:40; Rev. 22:17.

Thus we find, in the Scriptures, these two apparently contradictory truths; the sovereignty of God, and the free will of man. God never attempts to reconcile these truths, but allows them to run, in parallel lines, through His word. See Deut. 29:29; John 6:37. Many attempts have been made to reconcile these two doctrines, but only confusion has resulted.

There are two schools of thought in Christendom which are divided on this one question. One school, following the teaching of John Calvin, and calling themselves "Calvinists," can see nothing but the sovereignty of God in the Scriptures. The other

school, following the teachings of Arminius, and calling themselves "Arminians," can see nothing but the free will of man in those same Scriptures. The truth is found by believing both extremes, for they are both Scriptural.

It has been well said that "Calvinism and Arminianism, regarded as theological systems, may be compared to the thin, empty, crescent shaped form of the first phase of the new moon, with its two sharp pointed horns, butting at each other from the opposite sides of a darkened disc. Scripture does not alter the position but, by illuminating the whole intervening space, fuses both into one glorious orb of holy light."

God's sovereignty and man's choice have been likened to two sides of a pitched roof which meet—somewhere above the clouds! You have probably heard the story of the darky who, when asked by an agnostic to explain the doctrine of election replied: "God has nominated you as a candidate for heaven, and the Devil has nominated you as a candidate for hell; and whichever way you votes, you gets elected!"

Another illustration is that which likens salvation to a beautiful palace. Outside the main entrance, in shining letters are the gracious words: "Whosoever will may come!" Each poor sinner, owning his need as guilty and lost, and coming to this door is welcomed within. After he has entered, however, he sees written over the inside of the door the wondrous words "Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." Thus salvation has two sides: Godward and manward. It has been well said that each preacher of the gospel should be a Calvinist

on his knees, and an Arminian on the platform! We have purposely enlarged a little on this theme, because it is important that both truths be firmly believed and stoutly maintained.

(b) *The purpose of this gift.* We shall mention but four of these purposes. (i) *The praise of the eternal Godhead.* The Father (Eph. 1:3-6). The Son (Eph. 1:10-12). The Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 14). Thus the supreme purpose of God's predestinating grace is to bring eternal glory to Himself.

(ii) *Godliness of life, or Christlikeness of character.* All these profound truths of God's foreknowledge and predestination have a most practical application to the Christian's life. It has been well said that: "Ephesians begins in the heavenlies, but ends in the kitchen!" God's desire for His people is conformity, or likeness to His Son (Rom. 8:29). He lays great emphasis on their holiness of walk before the world (Eph. 1:4). He enjoins swift and unquestioning obedience to His word (I Pet. 1:2). He encourages them to live consistently, and thus maintain steadfastness of life (I Thess. 2:13-15).

Thus election is not connected so much with going *somewhere*, as in being *something*. We have been chosen in order that we might live holily, justly and unblameably in this present world. In other words, election is not so much concerned about where we are *going*, but *how* we are *living*, right now (I Thess. 2:10).

(iii) *The unity of all believers* (John 17:21). This unity, which God has formed, we are urged to keep. Note carefully that we are not asked to *make* it (Eph. 4:1-3). Christ has revealed His pur-

pose in regard to this unity, for He spoke of "One flock and one Shepherd" (John 10:16, R. V.). The believer must therefore allow nothing to mar or disrupt this unity between him and his fellow-believers. The man-made divisions, as evidenced in denominationalism, and which abound on every hand, are not of God, but of the flesh (I Cor. 3:3, 4).

(iv) *The eternal blessedness of His people.* (See John 17:24; cp. John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 4:17; I John 3:2). What a glorious prospect has been placed before the believer! It consists of one day sharing in the glory of the Savior! As the hymn writer has so beautifully expressed it:

"He and I, in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with Him,
His, that I am there."

(c) *The perpetuity of this gift* (Rom. 11:29). God's choice is eternal. God will never repent, or change His mind concerning any gift He has given. "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the Son of man that He should repent" (Num. 23:19). He knew all about us long before He chose us in Christ, and gave us to His Son. God is never surprised at anything that emanates from us. Knowing all that we were and ever should be, He gave us to His Son to be His forever. The world speaks of an "Indian giver." By this is meant one who gives a gift and then, because of some misunderstanding with the recipient of the gift, takes it back again! God is no "Indian Giver"! His gift, based on foreknowledge, is eternal and irrevocable. (See John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:33-39; Jude 24-25; Heb. 7:25).

(2) *He is Christ's by purchase.* (See I Cor. 6:

19, 20; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:9). Three things suggest themselves as we think of Christians being Christ's purchased possession.

(a) *The Purchaser* — Christ, the Redeemer (Mark 10:45). This was His purpose in coming. (See Gal. 2:20; Luke 4:18). To redeem means to buy back, or deliver by the payment of an adequate consideration.

(b) *The Price*—Himself. "His own blood" (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 1:5). Christ likened Himself to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls who, when he found the pearl of great price, gave all that he had, and bought it (Matt. 13:45, 46). No greater price was ever demanded or paid, than that which God demanded and Christ paid for our redemption. He gave "Himself." (See Phil. 2:5-8; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:25; I Tim. 2:6; Heb. 7:27; 9:26).

(c) *The Purpose*. Let us think of this in a three-fold way. (i) To be His own possession. (See Eph. 1:14; I Cor. 3:23; Isa. 43:1).

(ii) To glorify Him by a godly life, and to live for Him alone. (See I Pet. 2:9; Titus 2:14).

(iii) To be His Bride, and dwell forever with Him. (See Eph. 5:25-27). Thus the Christian is no longer his own property. He belongs to Another, who has bought him by His precious blood. His body, time, health, strength, talents, wealth and life are not his own: they all belong to Christ by right of purchase.

The believer is merely a steward of these things, and one day he must render an account to Christ as to how he has managed His estate. The Christian

is therefore obligated to and responsible to the Lord to allow Him to use all that He has purchased for whatever purpose He desires, wherever He pleases, and whenever He wills.

Paul called himself the “bond slave” of Christ. (See Rom. 1:1, R. V., margin; Gal. 1:10, etc.). May it be ours to present ourselves, in glad yieldedness to Him who bought us, that His will may be done through us!

“Ye are not your own,
Purchased with a price!
Precious blood of Christ—
Holy Sacrifice!
Spirit, body, soul,
All are His alone;
His to glorify Himself
And make His royal throne!”

May it be ours to respond:

“Not my own, O Lord,
Thine alone I’d be;
Take Thou full control,
As I yield to Thee;
By a righteous life,
Service, glad and free,
Glorify Thyself, O Lord,
Just as Thou wilt through me!”

CHAPTER SEVEN

(3) The Christian is Christ's by personal acceptance. See John 1:12; Eph. 1:13; I John 4:19.

God respects the human personality. He never coerces the will of man, but always appeals to it (Rev. 22:17). Christians belong to Christ, because they have willingly accepted Him as their Savior. Let us think of three things regarding this acceptance of Christ:

(a) *The reason for the choice.* Under the Spirit's convicting power we were made to realize, in some measure, our need as lost, guilty, helpless and hell-deserving sinners. This was anything but a pleasant discovery, but it was essential if ever we were to desire salvation. See Psalm 32:3-5; Matt. 9:12, 13; I Tim. 1:15; John 16:8; Isa. 6:5; Job 33:14-22.

(b) *The reception of the Savior.* Through the hearing of the gospel, Christ was then presented to us as the Savior. We learned He had borne our sins, and accomplished all the work necessary for the salvation of whosoever would believe on Him, in token of which God had raised Him from the dead. See I Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 4:24, 25. In simple faith, and by a definite act of the will, we believed on Him, received Him as our own personal Savior and confessed Him as our Lord. See Rom. 10:9-16; Acts 16:31. Thus we chose Him of our own volition, and now belong to Him by our own free choice.

A good illustration of what is involved in this choice is seen in the marriage ceremony. The marriage officer addresses the prospective groom and

asks: "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy lawful wedded wife?" If he answers: "I will"; the question is next put to the woman: "Wilt thou have this man to be thy lawful wedded husband?" If she replies: "I will," what takes place? These two become one. See Matt. 19: 5, 6.

This is exactly what happened the day we were saved. God said, as it were: "Wilt thou have My Son to be your Savior, henceforth to own Him as the Lord of thy life?" When we answered: "Yes, Lord Jesus, I will receive You to be my Savior and Lord," we were saved. There was no doubt as to the willingness of Christ to receive us (John 6:37). When we were willing to trust and own Him, we were made one in Him. See Gal. 3:28; II Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:4.

(c) *The result experienced.* We were "saved" (Eph. 2:8). God "justified us freely by His grace." That is to say, He declared us to be righteous. See Rom. 5:1; Acts 13:38, 39.

We were also made eternally one in Him, and blessed with all the spiritual blessings in Him (Eph. 1:3). We now love Him and find our delight in serving Him. See I Pet. 1:8; I John 4:19; Acts 27:25.

(4) He is Christ's by power of deliverance. See Col. 1:13; Psalm 116:7, 8; Rom. 6:17; Luke 4:18, 11:21, 22.

This is experimental. That is to say, Christians have personally experienced His delivering power. See II Sam. 22:2; Psalm 40:1-3. Scripture indicates many aspects of this deliverance. Let us look at a few:

(a) *From Satan's kingdom and possession.* See Col. 1:13; Luke 11:21, 22; II Cor. 4:4; Heb. 2:14. The power of "the god of this age," whom Christ called "the prince of this world," who so long blinded our minds and kept us captive, has been broken by the strong Son of God! He is the mighty Deliverer!

(b) *From the bondage of sin.* See Rom. 6:9-18; John 8:32-36. Sin not only defiles the sinner, but it binds its victims, and renders them helpless to deliver themselves from the slavery into which they have been brought. How good it is to know that Christ: "breaks the power of cancelled sin, and sets the prisoner free!"

(c) *From the wrath to come.* See I Thess. 1:10; John 5:24. God's wrath which is "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," shall never fall upon those who have fled for refuge to the One who bore all the judgment due to their sin. The Divine assurance is: "They shall not come into condemnation," and the believer is further guaranteed: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

(d) *From the law* (Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 3:10-13, 5:1-4, 2:19). The law is viewed in Scripture as a master who demands what man, because of "the weakness of the flesh," cannot give. Christ magnified the law in His life and satisfied all its just demands by His death. The believer is now viewed by God as having died to the law in the person of his Substitute.

(e) *From this present evil world.* See Gal. 1:4, 6:14; Titus 2:11-14. The cross is not only the revelation of the world's hatred of Christ, but it is also

the measure of the believer's separation from this "present evil world." Just as the returning waters of the Red Sea not only destroyed Israel's foes, but separated them from the land of Egypt; so the cross-work of Christ has not only destroyed sin's power, but stands between each Christian and the world, with all its pleasures, pomp, popularity, policies, power and pelf.

(f) *From the bondage of corruption at the second coming of the Lord Jesus* (Rom. 8:21). This will deliver the Christian from the very possibility of sinning.

Well may the Christian, as he realizes his deliverance, sing from his heart:

"My chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken,
And I am free!
O, let the triumphs of His grace be spoken,
Who died for me!"

(5) **He is Christ's by Preservation.** See Jude 1; John 17:11; I Pet. 1:5; John 10:26-30; Heb. 7:25; Phil. 1:6; John 5:24; Rom. 8:1; Heb. 9:24-28. This preservation, or eternal security, is guaranteed because of a three-fold provision of Christ.

(a) *Through the redemption* which He procured on the cross. By means of this, the believer is *pardoned*. See Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14. Each Christian's sins have been put out of reach (Psalm 103:12), sight (Isa. 38:17), and mind (Heb. 10:17). The blood has completely blotted them out (I John 1:7; Isa. 44:22).

(b) *Through Christ's representation* at the right hand of God in heaven. Through this, the believer is *preserved*. See Heb. 7:25; Jude 1. The Scrip-

tures declare that the believer's security is guaranteed by the ceaseless intercessory work of Christ, the great High Priest, Advocate and Intercessor. See Heb. 2:17, 4:14, 7:26, 8:1, 10:21.

(i) As the great High Priest, He succours (Heb. 2:18), sympathizes (Heb. 4:15), and delivers (Heb. 7:25, 26). He makes access into God's presence possible to all His people, and graciously invites them to come with holy boldness, into the holiest of all. See Heb. 10:19-21.

(ii) As the Intercessor, He exercises a ceaseless vigil on our behalf. See Heb. 7:25, 9:24.

(iii) As the Advocate He pleads our case before the Father when we sin. See I John 2:1. Note: It does not say: "If any man *confess*;" but, "If any man *sin*." His advocacy is put into effect the moment the believer sins, thus maintaining his position before the Father's face. The frank and prompt confession of the sin, on the part of the believer, restores the fellowship and communion (I John 1:9).

(c) *Through Christ's revelation*, at His second coming. Through this the Christian will be *presented* faultless before the Father. See Jude 24; Eph. 5:27; I Cor. 1:7 (margin) I Pet. 1:13. Christ's purpose, as expressed in His prayer shall then be fulfilled. See John 17:24; I Thess. 4:17; John 14:1-3. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the believer's security both for the past, present and future. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

(6) He is Christ's by His indwelling presence. That is to say, Christ dwells within him. See Gal. 2:20; II Cor. 13:5; Eph. 3:17; John 14:23. The effect

of His indwelling presence is realized in a two-fold way.

(a) *There is inward communion.* See John 14:23; Col. 3:16. By this is meant the conscious sense of the presence of Christ, by the Spirit, in the believer. This stems from a life of obedience to the will of God, as found in the word of God; and of dependence on God, as seen in a life of prayer. This inward communion cannot be described, for it defies definition, but can be experienced and enjoyed.

Francis Ridley Havergal has beautifully expressed what should be the supreme desire of each Christian in these lines:

“Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living bright reality;
More present to faith’s vision keen,
Than any earthly object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e’en the closest earthly tie.”

(b) *Outward manifestation.* The result of this inward communion will be seen by others. See Acts 4:13; Gal. 2:20. The Christian life has been well defined as “the *outliving* of the *inliving* Christ.” See John 15:4, 5; II Cor. 3:2, 3; II Thess. 1:12; Phil. 4:13. Only as He is given His rightful place as Lord, and thus has full control of our bodies, can He glorify Himself, through us, to the world around us.

(7) **He is Christ’s by Position** in His body, the Church. (See Col. 1:18, 19; Eph. 5:30, 1:22, 23, 3:6, 4:4, 15, 16; I Cor. 12:12-27). God uses the figure of a body to describe the Church. As we think of a body, two things naturally suggest themselves.

(a) *The Head of the body, Christ.* (See Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22). As the head controls all movements

of the physical body, so Christ is in absolute control of the Church. It is not controlled by a man-made priest, ministers, bishops, synods, councils, or a pope: but by *Christ alone*.

(b) *The members of the body*, consisting of every believer in Christ. (See I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30). Each Christian is said to be

(i) *Baptized by the Spirit into the body*. (See I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:3).

(ii) *Given a place for a purpose in that body*. (Read carefully all of I Cor. 12). Every Christian has his own Divinely appointed place in the body. There should therefore be no room for jealousy in the body.

(iii) *The purpose*. (See Eph. 3:10-11, 5:27). The Church declares God's wisdom to the intelligencies of heaven, and the eternal triumph of His Son. The fact that the Head of the body is in heaven, is the guarantee that all the members shall one day be there also. (See John 14:19; I Cor. 15:23; Rev. 5:1-14). His promise: "That where I am, there ye may be also," should cause each Christian's heart to leap within him for joy! (John 14:3).

We have dwelt quite a little on this first title of the believer, for it is full of spiritual significance. We have learned that each Christian is Christ's by presentation, purchase, personal acceptance, power, preservation, presence and position. What a glorious and unbreakable bond this is which unites us to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us!

CHAPTER EIGHT

2. "BELIEVERS."

CHRISTIANS are called "believers" because of their *faith*. They are characterized by their belief in a Person and a message. (See Acts 5:14; I Tim. 4:12; Acts 2:44, 4:32, 8:37, etc.). As we think of the word "faith," several things naturally suggest themselves.

(1) *The definition of faith* (Heb. 11:1). Faith simply consists of implicit reliance upon the person, or the word, or the work of another. True faith consists of three elements, each of which is essential to its constitution: namely, knowledge, belief and trust. By knowledge is meant the realization of the truth of certain facts or truths, such as man's sin, God's provision in redemption, and the way of salvation. By belief is meant one's assent to these facts as being true. By trust is meant the definite committal of one's self to the Person of Christ, and a definite reception of His salvation.

(2) *The necessity for faith*. Without faith no one can please God. (See Heb. 11:6; Mark 9:23; Heb. 4:2; James 1:6, 7). Unbelief would seek to make God out to be a liar. (See I John 5:10; Titus 1:2). Thus unbelief is an insult to God, for it denies God's faithfulness to Himself and His word. (See Heb. 6:18). Unbelief is satanic, for it questions the veracity of God's word. (See John 8:44; cp. Gen. 3:1).

Faith is thus the essential requirement for the experience of God's salvation. (See John 5:24; Gal-

2:16; Rom. 4:5, 3:22; Acts 13:38, 39, etc.). The language of faith is tersely expressed by the apostle Paul when he declared: "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25). Faith gives God the credit for speaking the truth and dares to rely and act on His word alone.

(3) *The authority of faith*—the holy Scriptures. To act without the authority of the word of God is presumption, and to act contrary to it is unbelief and rebellion. (See Luke 24:25-29, 44; John 20:31; Acts 17:11). The Divinely inspired Scriptures contain the revelation of God's mind and will. Within it is found all that is necessary for the guidance of the believer. It contains "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (See II Peter 1:3; I John 5:10; John 5:39; Heb. 10:7; Isa. 8:20).

(4) *The source of faith*. (See Rom. 10:17). Faith comes through the hearing of the word of God. This is the great argument of Romans 10. Note the seven words that are linked together in verses 9, 14 and 15; "Confess, saved, call, believed, heard, preached, sent." Each word is dependent on the other. Read these in their reverse order, and the logic for the necessity of preaching is inescapable.

(5) *The object of faith*. This is Christ, the Son of God. Faith is never occupied with itself, but with its object. Faith has no value apart from its object. Faith does not save: it is Christ, and Christ alone. Faith simply accepts, as true, the word of God, acts upon what it says, and willingly receives God's gift which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Faith is the hand that receives the gift. When offered a gift, a person is not occupied with his hand that reaches out to take it, but with the gift offered to him. In other words, the emphasis, in salvation, is not on the word: "believe," but on "Christ." (See Acts 16:31, 10:43, 8:35; Heb. 12:1, 2; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 1:2-4).

(6) *The results of faith.* These are very many. Let us look at a few.

(a) God is honored and pleased. (See Rom. 4:20; Heb. 11). Faith delights Deity, for it places complete confidence in God, His word, His Son, and His work. (See Matt. 15:28; Luke 7:50).

(b) Christ is accepted as the Son of God, the sinner's Substitute, the believer's Savior. (See John 1:12; Acts 20:21; Col. 2:6; John 6:47, etc.).

(c) The Spirit is received. (See Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13, etc.).

In response to the sinner's reception of Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit seals the believer by His indwelling presence. As the old hymn puts it:

"Soon as my all I ventured,
On the atoning blood;
The Holy Spirit entered,
And I was born of God."

(d) Salvation is experienced. (See Eph. 2:8; Mark 16:16; Luke 7:50, 18:42; Heb. 10:39). This is not a matter of *feeling*, but of *fact*. There is no such thing as "feeling saved"; but there is such a thing as feeling happy because of an assured *knowledge* from the word of God, of salvation, free, full and eternal. The work of Christ, when trusted, makes us *safe*, and the word of God, when believed, makes us *sure*.

(e) Good works are produced. While it is true we are saved by faith alone, yet it is by that *kind* of faith that is *not* alone; for true faith always evidences itself by good works. Note the expression: "Faith which *worketh* by love" (Gal. 5:6). (See also I Thess. 1:3; Heb. 10:23, 24; James 2:14-18, 26).

(f) Promises are proved. Most of God's promises are conditional upon faith in and obedience to them. They are to be tried and proved. (See James 1:5, 6; Rom. 4:20, 21, etc.).

(g) Spiritual blessings are enjoyed. It is one thing to own these spiritual blessings, and another to actually possess and enjoy them. Faith takes possession. (See Rom. 15:13; I Peter 1:8; II Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; II Peter 1:4-11; John 20:29). While the land of Canaan was promised to the children of Israel, its possession was conditioned upon them placing the soles of their feet upon it (Joshua 1:3). Thus the land was to be possessed by means of a *two foot rule*!

(7) *The consummation of faith—sight.* (See I Peter 1:9; I Thess. 4:13-18; I John 3:1-3; I Cor. 13:8-13). At the second coming of Christ His people shall see Him, be like Him and be with Him forever. Faith shall give place to sight and, for all eternity, the redeemed in heaven shall see and praise the One on whom they believed while on earth!

CHAPTER NINE

3. "SAINTS."

THEY ARE thus called because of their *separation*. See Acts 9:13; Rom. 1:7, 16:2; I Cor. 1:2, etc. "Called to be saints," should be rendered: "saints by calling." That is to say, they were constituted saints by the call of God. See I Cor. 6:1; Eph. 2:19, 3:8; Jude 3, etc. It will be clear from these, and many more scripture references, that every regenerated person is designated by God a "saint." We are left in no doubt as to the fact that each believer became such the moment he was saved.

There is a great amount of confusion in Christendom as to this scriptural fact. The word, "saint," refers to the *standing*, or the position of every Christian before God, and not to his *state* or condition. Paul wrote a letter to some "saints" at Corinth, who were anything but saintly in their behavior. See I Cor. 1:11-15, cp., 5:1-13. Though he had to severely rebuke them for their misconduct, yet not for one moment did he call their position, or title, as "saints" into question. We shall think of four things in connection with this title.

(1) *The definition.* A saint is a sanctified person. To sanctify simply means to set apart. In the Old Testament, the word is made to refer both to persons and also to inanimate things that were to be set apart for God's service. See Ex. 40:9-13, etc. Thus a saint is one who has been set apart, or separated by God for himself. The believer is said to be separated from his previous standing in Adam,

from his sins and its condemnation, and from the world.

(2) *The means by which this sanctification is brought about.* The triune God is again seen in the sanctification of the believer. (a) The Father sanctified us by His choice of us. See Jude 1; Jer. 1:5. (b) The Son has sanctified us by His offering on our behalf. See Heb. 10:10-14. (c) The Holy Spirit has sanctified us by His indwelling presence within. See I Peter 1:2, cp.; I Cor. 6:11.

Each believer is now constituted a saint by Divine calling. What dignity, privilege and responsibility has thus been conferred upon us! Thus there is no necessity, as is practiced in some ecclesiastical circles, to go through the intricate and ornate ceremonial of canonization in order to finally emerge as a recognized saint.

(3) *The result.* Sanctification is the spiritual birthright and position of each believer in the sight of God. What blessed assurance the Scripture gives as to this fact! We read that: "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). Thus each Christian has been eternally set apart for God.

(4) *The practical application.* Sanctification, like many other truths of Scripture, has a threefold aspect: past, present and future.

(a) We have been sanctified. See Jude 1; Heb. 10:10; I Peter 1:2; I Cor. 6:11. This is *instantaneous* and takes place at the new birth.

(b) We are to sanctify (or separate) ourselves from all known sin in our lives. This is *progressive*

and continuous. See Lev. 11:44, 20:7. God has supplied the means for this present tense aspect of sanctification. It is accomplished through:

(i) The study of the word of God. See John 17:17; Psa. 119:9; II Cor. 7:1. As the Scriptures are consistently, prayerfully, reverently, and thoughtfully read, any defilement in one's life is thereby revealed. The Bible acts as a light by which we may judge our conduct in the sight of God. See Heb. 4:12.

(ii) This should be followed by self-judgment and confession of the sin to God, and a resolute forsaking of the sin. See I John 1:9; II Cor. 6:17, 7:1; Josh. 3:5, 7:13; II Tim. 2:21; I Pet. 3:15. (R. V.)

The result of this exercise of heart is holy living. This daily sanctification of oneself is maintained as the Holy Spirit is allowed to remain ungrieved within. Any misconduct of the believer grieves this "holy heavenly Guest." See Eph. 4:25-32.

Thus by the study of and obedience to the word of God, together with ceaseless vigilance and self-judgment, the Christian will be enabled to sanctify himself from all that which is displeasing to God. See John 15:3; Phil. 1:20,21.

(c) We shall yet be sanctified at the second coming of Christ. See I Thess. 5:23, 24. This lies in the future. When this event takes place, the believer shall be separated from the "body of his humiliation," with all its frailty and limitations, and be clothed upon with a body like unto that of his Lord. See Phil. 3:20, 21. The fallen nature, called "the flesh," will be left behind forever, and thus the believer shall be

set apart for God eternally! This is the great hope of each believer. The Christian shall not only be with his Lord, but like Him forever.

4. "CHILDREN OF GOD."

This title is given them because of their *relationship*. See John 11:52; Rom. 8:16, 9:8; Gal. 3:26; I John 3:10; Eph. 1:5, 3:15.

In its last analysis, the Bible is a book of two generations and two genealogies: Adam and Christ. See Gen. 5:1; Matt. 1:1. Every human being was born *naturally* into the first, and each believer was born again *supernaturally* into the last. Thus the whole world is divided into two families: "in Adam," or "in Christ." In Adam by a natural generation; in Christ by a supernatural regeneration. Let us think of these two families, and note the birth into and the characteristics of each family.

(1) *The old family*: "in Adam." (a) Birth. Note Gen. 5:3, cp.; John 3:6. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness" as a fallen man. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." In other words: "like produces like." Each person is a sinner by birth. See Psa. 51:5. Each person "born of the flesh," is dominated by a fallen nature, which is irremediably evil.

(b) Characteristics. (i) Because of this sinful human nature, the sinner is described as being at enmity with God. See Rom. 8:5-9, etc. (ii) Disobedient to God. See Eph. 2:2, etc. (iii) Guilty of practicing sin. See Titus 3:3; I John 3:8.

(c) The end of such a life is death and judgment. See Eph. 2:3; Heb. 9:27; Rom. 6:23. Thus enmity,

disobedience, sin and judgment characterize the family of Adam.

(2) *The new family: "in Christ."*

(a) Birth. See John 3:3-5; I Pet. 1:23; II Cor. 5:17; James 1:18; Rom. 8:15. The new birth is the impartation of Divine life to the believing sinner upon his reception, by faith, of Christ as his Savior and Lord. This is what is implied by being "born of the Spirit," or "born from above."

(b) Characteristics. Godliness or God likeness of character. Again, it is a case of "like producing like." See I John 3:9, 10; Titus 2:11-14; Phil. 2:15; Eph. 5:1-4; II Peter 1:3-8; Matt. 5:16. As an earthly father, by means of a physical birth, reproduces his characteristics in his children; so the heavenly Father, by means of a spiritual birth, reproduces His characteristics in His children. (I Peter 1:14-21).

(c) The end of such a life is eternal glory in the Father's home. See I John 3:1, 2; Rev., chapters 21 and 22.

CHAPTER TEN

5. "BRETHREN."

THEY ARE thus termed because of their love. See Matt. 23:8; John 13:33-35, 21:23; Rom. 12:1-10, margin; Acts 9:30; I Cor. 15:58; Eph. 6:23; I Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; II Pet. 1:7; I John 3:14. This is the most frequently used title of the Christian in the New Testament. Inasmuch as we have been brought to know God as our Father through the Spirit's regenerating work; therefore all God's children are our brothers and sisters in the family of God. See Eph. 3:14, 15.

Let us think of this love that should characterize all the "brethren in Christ."

(1) *The source of this love.* It is God Himself. See I John 4:8-10; Rom. 5:5; John 17:26; I John 4:19; Jer. 31:3. Thus this love is not mere human sentiment, but a Divine impartation. This love has been "shed abroad" in the hearts of all His children.

(2) *The scope of it.*

(a) All the children of God. See I John 5:1, 3:14, 3:11, 4:11-20; Heb. 13:1; John 13:34, 35. Each believer has the same Father, the same Savior, the same indwelling Spirit, the same guide book and the same eternal home.

(b) The world, for which Christ died. See II Cor. 5:14, 15; John 3:16. The love of Christ should be the constraining motive for all sacrificial Christian service. It far exceeds mere human affection.

(3) *The sacrifice of it.* (I John 3:16,17). Love is ever measured by the sacrifice it makes on behalf of its object. See Eph. 5:25. Christ's love for us led Him to sacrifice Himself. What has our love for Him cost us in the way of sacrifice? See Rom. 12:1,2; John 15:13; I John 3:16-17. Surely since He loved us and gave Himself for us, we should, in love for Him, give ourselves for Him in whole-hearted devotion and service.

(4) *The sign of it.*

(a) It is the mark by means of which the world recognizes the true disciples of Christ. See John 13:34,35. Note, it was not by the sermons they preached, or the miracles they performed; but by their love for one another. It is the badge of the brethren.

(b) It is an indication of regeneration. See I John 3:14. In the early days of Christianity the heathen used to exclaim: "Behold, how these Christians love one another!"

(c) It is proof of real spiritual progress. See Col. 1:3-5, cp.; I Cor. 13:4-7. A spirit of envious and censorious criticism is a sure indication of carnality and lack of spiritual progress. See James 3:16.

(5) *The service of it.* Service, without love as its motivating principle, is utterly profitless both to God and man. See I Cor. 13:1-5. Notice carefully that love is said to be greater than anything we can say (v. 1), possess (v. 2), or bestow (v. 3). No one can serve like a lover (Gen. 29:20; Gal. 5:13; Heb. 6:10). For a beautiful illustration of this fact, look at the case of the Hebrew servant (Exodus 21:1-6).

(6) *The stability of it.* (I Cor. 13:4-13). Love is the enduring force (v. 7). It is the greatest of the abiding virtues (v. 13). God's love, like Himself, is immutable, and unchanging through all the ages. It is constant from the beginning to the end. See Jer. 31:3; John 13:1; Zeph. 3:17. We need to remember that love is not a sickly or sentimental thing; but is the most practical thing in the Christian life. It is the motive of all God's dealings with us, and should be the basis of all our dealing with our brethren, for "love never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8).

6. "DISCIPLES."

They are designated thus because of their *obedience*. A disciple is a student, learner or follower of another. The word "discipline" is derived from this term, and refers particularly to training. Christians are called disciples because they are learners and followers of Christ. Let us think of six things in connection with Christian discipleship.

(1) *The call to discipleship.* See Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 3:13; John 1:35-51. Here Christ gives a definite call to follow Him. This is more than believing on Him for salvation; it implies definite and unhesitating obedience to Him as Lord and Master. Someone has expressed this in poetic form as follows:

"I heard the call: "Come, follow Me."
My gold grew dim,
My soul went after Him:
Who would not follow if he heard His call?"

(2) *The commission of discipleship.* See Matt. 28:16-20; John 15:16; Acts 1:8; John 4:31-38. Here is the work of witness for Christ, with ever widening circles of influence: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth.

(3) *The obligations of discipleship.*

(a) Love to one another (John 15:17).

(b) Humility of heart as exemplified by Christ Himself. See John 13:3-15; Luke 9:46-48; Mark 9:33-35. There is no room for pride in discipleship. It is the meek who are taught His way (Psa. 25:9).

(c) Prayer (Luke 11:1-4). Discipleship means dependency, and this is expressed in a life of prayer. Hence this beautiful "Disciple's prayer."

(d) All things necessary for their discipleship. These are found in the Sermon on the Mount. This instruction was given particularly for disciples. Read carefully these three chapters. See Matt., chapters 5 to 7.

(4) *The cost of discipleship.* See Luke 14:25-33. There are no flowery beds of ease promised to Christ's disciples. The servant is not greater than his Lord. See Matt. 10:24, 25; Phil. 3:4-9; Acts 5:41. Christ demands whole hearted obedience from His people, with no mental reservations.

(5) *The continuance in discipleship.* See John 8:31. The result of regeneration is growth; the evidence of believing is fruit; the proof of discipleship is continuance. See Acts 13:43; Col. 1:23; John 15:9, 10; Acts 2:42; Col. 4:2; II Tim. 3:14.

(6) *The compensation of discipleship.*

(a) Present joy. While discipleship involves considerable renunciation, it also provides ample compensation. There is no joy comparable to the joy of the Christian, as he walks in obedience to his Lord and Master. "The joy of the Lord" becomes

his strength for the task and enables him to joy in God as he treads the path that lies before him.

It should never be forgotten that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” See Luke 19: 37, 10: 17-20; Acts 5: 41; Phil. 4: 4; John 15: 11, 13: 17; Neh. 8: 10; I Tim. 4: 8.

(b) Future glory with Him. What a wealth of meaning is implied in the Savior’s promise: “That where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14: 1-3. The hymn writer has beautifully expressed the ecstatic joy of the redeemed in the following words:

“If here on earth the thought of Jesus’ love
Lifts our poor hearts this weary world above,
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings;
What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What the unmingled fulness of His love?
What hallelujahs shall His presence raise,
What but one loud eternal burst of praise!”

May it be the steadfast purpose of every reader to be “His disciple indeed” (John 8: 31).

7. “SERVANTS.”

They are given this name because of their *work*. See Matt. 10: 24; Rom. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 10; II Peter 1: 1; Jude 1; Rom. 6: 16. As we think of the Christian as a servant several things suggest themselves.

(1) *The Master*—Christ. See Matt. 23: 8; Gal. 1: 10; John 13: 13-16; Rom. 14: 4. The Christian has but one Master to please. If he succeeds in pleasing Him, it matters not what others think or say of him. What a Master He is! There is none so kind, so wise, so righteous, so gracious, so sympathetic as our

blessed Lord and Master! To know Him is to love Him; to love Him is to serve Him; and to serve Him is the greatest honor and delight imaginable!

(2) *The motive for the work.* The motive of all true, faithful and wholehearted service for the Lord springs from a three-fold source.

(a) *Love for the Master.* See II Cor. 5:14, 15. His love must ever be the constraining motive of all the believer's service. The Lord's work is to be "a labor of love" (I Thess. 1:3).

(b) *Compassion for the lost.* See Matt. 15:32, 20:34; Zech. 7:9; I Pet. 3:8; Lam. 3:22. Note how often it was said of Christ that He had compassion on the lost and guilty sons and daughters of men.

(c) *A sense of solemn obligation and duty.* See I Cor. 9:16; Luke 17:7-10; Mark 13:34. The Master has issued His commands. It is not the servant's place to pick and choose which orders he shall obey, and which he shall disregard. The work of witness is obligatory on all Christians who, as the servants of Christ, are expected to know and willingly do their duty. To paraphrase Nelson's famous signal: "Christ expects this day that each Christian shall do his duty."

(2) *The method of the work.* How should this work be done? Scripture indicates it should be done:

(a) *Humbly.* See II Tim. 2:24; Acts 20:19; I Cor. 3:5-7; Phil. 2:3-11. The example of his Master should forever deliver the servant of the Lord from that hateful and entirely unnecessary thing called pride.

(b) *Self-denyingly*. See Rom. 14:14-18. The work of the Lord is a costly thing, and the believer must be prepared to pay the price in terms of "blood, sweat and tears."

(c) *Scripturally*. See I Sam. 15:22. The *word* of the Lord must guide the *work* of the Lord. See II Tim. 2:15. Certain fundamental and scriptural principles must be adhered to if our work is to meet His approving eye, and earn His "well done."

(4) *The manner* of the work. Whole-heartedly. See Col. 3:23, 24; Eph. 6:6, 7; Rom. 12:11. Whole-hearted obedience to the will of God glorifies the commonplace things of life, and invests the most ordinary of routine tasks with royal dignity. All service, whether secular or spiritual, should be done as unto Him, for "we serve the Lord Christ."

(5) *The manifestation* of it. See I Cor. 3:10-15. All our service for Him shall be brought into review at the judgment seat of Christ. See Matt. 25:21; John 12:26; Rom. 14:10.

Thus these seven titles of the people of God: "Christians," "Believers," "Saints," "Children of God," "Brethren," "Disciples" and "Servants," combine to set forth the characteristics of all those who profess to know Christ as their Savior and Lord.

May this study of "The Christian, His Definition, History and Titles" be used of the Lord Himself to stir up the hearts of His people to a greater realization of their privileges, and a more faithful discharge of their responsibilities as Christians!

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