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What Must I Do to be Saved?

SERMONS

By T. B. Larimore

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What Must I Do to be Saved?

This important question may, with perfect propriety, be propounded by alien sinners. It may, with equal propriety, be propounded by children of the living God. All sinners out of Christ are alien sinners; as all Gentiles are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 11-13). All who have obeyed the gospel are in Christ Jesus, are sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

They may still sin, however. All of us are sinners, in some sense and to some ex-
tent. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (John 1. 8-10).

But there is a world of difference between the relationship subsisting between alien sinners and God, and Christians and God. Hence the importance of the term "alien sinners," to definitely designate and locate sinners out of Christ. Alien sinners are not in Christ—never have been. Christians, even when they sin, are still in Christ, are still children—disobedient children—of God.

Christians and sinners are sometimes designated as "saints and sinners." All of us, whether saints or sinners, should be interested in the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer thereto. Alien sinners should be interested in this important question and answer, that they may know how to enter into Christ; where, the Spirit says, "we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1. 14). Christians should be similarly interested, that they may know how to so live as to make their calling and
election sure, and finally enter into the rest that remains to the people of God.

Duty demands that both saints and sinners propound this question. Duty no less clearly and imperatively demands that the answer thereto be proclaimed from the pulpit and published by the press—proclaimed publicly and privately by the children of the living God—wheresoever there are sinners to be saved, and saints to tell the story of Jesus and his love. Those who are really in the service of the living God, in Christ, in the church we read about in the Bible, should be ready, always, everywhere, and under all circumstances, to give the correct, Scriptural answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" God demands this of all his children. The Apostle Peter, divinely inspired, writing to the entire Church of God, for all time, wrote: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter iii, 15). "To give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you," is to give the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Where shall we go to get the answer to this question? We can not go to the
depths of our own souls, to the recesses of our own hearts, and elicit it from the labyrinths of our own human wisdom; for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23). Man can not, unaided by revelation, even reason from nature up to nature's God;" for the Bible, the Book of God, declares that "the world, by wisdom, knew not God;—knew him not—never knew him—has never known him—by human wisdom. This is evidently the thought. Of course, then, man can not reason out the way to God—can not draw from the depths of his own wisdom the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Hence the Holy Spirit says: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God; it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21).

Man is human, not divine; but the answer to this question must be a divine answer; hence, must come from a divine source. Therefore we can not—certainly should not—look into our own hearts, or trust our own feelings or dreams or impulses for an answer to this question, or for or as evidence of acceptance with God. If we do, we then trust, not God, but self. God "is a shield unto those who put their trust in him" (Prov. xxxi. 5); but if we
look to self, trust our own feelings or dreams or impulses, we put our trust in self, instead of in God. This being true, let us look to him—to the divine source—for an answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

If we could go directly to Jehovah, as Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses and Elijah may have done; ask him the question, and get the answer by direct revelation from his own lips, in his own language and voice, of course that would satisfy us perfectly. It is not possible for us to do that, however. If we could go directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, sit at his feet like Mary of old, ask the question, and hear the answer in his own sweet voice and words—voice and words sweeter than the sweetest song by angels sung—not one of us would hesitate to accept that answer. But we can not do that. The day of his personal presence on earth has passed. If we could go directly to the Holy Spirit in person, converse with him, propound this question and get an answer, that answer would be perfectly satisfactory to all of us who have just relationship of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, for they are all equally divine, and the answer of the Holy Spirit would be the answer of all. But we can not ask this question of the Holy Spirit in person.
and hear the Spirit's answer directly given.

Nor is it possible for us to appeal directly to angels for, and from them receive, an answer to the question. There was a day when God sent angels to earth, to make revelations to men, or to direct them where they could receive revelations. An angel appeared to Cornelius and told him where he could find an inspired man who would tell him what he must do to be saved. (Acts x.) "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16). This was addressed to the churches (congregations) composing the kingdom, the church, of Christ. But that day has passed; and, if we are sane, it is not possible for man to so bewilder us as to make us believe we can appeal directly to angels and be answered by them, or have angels visit us, to answer this, or any other question.

If we could appeal directly to inspired patriarchs, prophets, apostles or evangelists in person, and receive from them an inspired answer to this question, that answer should, and would, satisfy us, of course; but we can not do that. Their tongues have been still, their lips have been silent, their bodies have been dust for
ages; and we can not reach their spirits in the eternal world and question them there.

To whom, or to what, then, can we appeal? We can practically, though not directly and personally, appeal to all of these. We can appeal to the Bible—the Word of the living God. When we do this we appeal to inspired patriarchs, prophets, apostles and evangelists; since they, as servants of the living God, wrote the Bible. As angels were employed as agents of God, to bring about a revelation of the truth, we appeal to angels when we appeal to the truth. We appeal to the Holy Spirit when we appeal to the Bible, since the Holy Spirit directed patriarchs, prophets, apostles and evangelists to write according to the will of him whose word the Bible is. We appeal to Christ, by appealing to the Bible, since Christ sent the Holy Spirit to inspire men to record his words and make known his Father's holy will. We appeal to God when we appeal to the Bible, since he gave the Spirit to Christ and sent it to men, to inspire them to write his word.

By appealing to the Bible, therefore, we appeal to inspired patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, angels, the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ and Jehovah himself. If we go to the Bible and find
therein an answer to this question, it is the same as if all the inspired patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, angels, the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ and Jehovah himself were assembled together, and we should ask the question, and the great I AM should answer, and all the other ranks of intelligence, divine, angelic and inspired, should say "Amen and Amen."

Shall we ask more than that? May the Lord have mercy on all who are not satisfied with such an answer. The Lord Almighty has answered this question in his Book of books, and that answer is better and surer, and, therefore, safer and more reliable, than if God should speak the answer from his very throne, down through the rifted heavens, so that we could hear every syllable as it came from his own holy lips.

The Bible teaches this. Otherwise I should certainly never say it. The Apostle Peter, guided by the Spirit of the living God, writing to the church of Christ, alludes to God's having spoken from heaven so as to be heard—when he, Peter, and others heard the voice of the great I AM, as Jesus stood, dripping, on Jordan's banks, immediately after his baptism, and again on Hermon's holy height, at the
time of his transfiguration. He says he and his fellow apostles did not follow "cunningly devised fables" in making known to the world "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," but were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses—saw the majesty of Jesus and heard the voice of God, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then he adds: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1. 19-21).

The first chapter of 2d Peter is a brief chapter—only twenty-one verses. The first four verses refer to Christians having been delivered from Satan's service and brought into the service of the living God. The next seven verses, beginning with the fifth and ending with the eleventh, tell us how to progress in the Christian life, so as to be eternally saved. The other ten verses give us the lesson to which I have just referred, showing, as clearly as God, Christ and the Holy Spirit combined
can show, that the Bible, as given by Jehovah to man, is a surer source of information to us, as well as a safer source from which to get an answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” than heaven itself would be, if from heaven the voice of God could be heard, once, or even twice, and no more, as he sent the answer down to earth, to be remembered, but not recorded.

It is easy to understand why. If we should ask that question now, and God should, once for all, answer it from heaven, to be remembered, but not recorded, we would be confused and in doubt about it to-morrow. We would differ and dispute about what he said, and in a short time there would be nothing reliable in it. But we have it in the Bible. It is fixed. It has been preserved for ages. We can turn to the Book of God again and again, a thousand times, or ten thousand times, if we will, and it is forever just the same.

Do you say, “If God should speak the answer from heaven, we surely would not, and could not, forget, or differ about it”? You know too much about the uncertainty of memory to say that. Moreover, the Bible says otherwise; and the Bible is always right. In John xii, 28, 29, we are told that God did speak from heaven to
Christ, expressing his appreciation, and
then and there, a difference of opinion
arose among the people, some saying it
thundered, others saying an angel spoke
to Christ. There, with the Savior in their
midst, they differed in opinion when God
spoke from heaven, some of them de-
claring the voice of God to be not the
voice of God, but thunder. As in every-
thing else, the Bible is right when it says,
contrasting the revealed will of the Lord
Almighty, as given in the Book of books,
with God’s word coming down from his
very lips to earth, so as to be heard, but
not seen: “We have also a more sure word
of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that
ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth
in a dark place, until the day dawn, and
the day star arise in your hearts; knowing
this first, that no prophecy of the Scrip-
ture is of any private interpretation. For
the prophecy came not in old time by the
will of man; but holy men of God spake as
they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2
Peter 1:19-21).

The Bible is the expression of God’s will
recorded by men who were moved and in-
spired by the Holy Spirit, and is a surer,
safer and better guide than language from
God’s own lips, coming down to us, to be
heard and remembered, but not recorded.
The difference between the two is the difference between verbal declarations and written statements. There is not a sane man in all this country who would not rather have the note of a responsible man for ten dollars than to have the verbal promise of that same man to pay him ten dollars at the time specified in the note. Not necessarily that he lacks confidence in the man making the promise; but it is a well-recognized truth that written agreements are safer and surer and more reliable than verbal promises. We can appeal, then, to the word of the living God for an answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" with the absolute assurance that the answer therein recorded is perfectly safe and sure.

The Bible gives two distinct answers to the question, God having one law of pardon for alien sinners and another law of pardon for erring Christians. In investigating this question, it is logical, Scriptural, prudent, proper and right to examine it first from the alien sinner's point of view, and then from the point of view occupied by Christians; since all the days we spend as alien sinners are spent before we become Christians. Hence, very naturally and necessarily, we are personally interested in the question, "What must I do to
be saved?" as propounded by alien sinners, before we can be personally interested in it as propounded by Christians.

There ought to be such a demand for the answer to this question, hence for plain, sensible, Gospel preaching, as would make it the most popular preaching the world has ever known. Unfortunately, however, there is a wide-spread, deeply-seated, and firmly-rooted prejudice against this question and the answer thereto, when the interests of alien sinners are involved. So far as I know or believe, all religious people who believe in Christ believe it is proper and right to tell Christians what they must do to be saved; but it is probably safe to say millions of them seriously object to any preaching that plainly, positively, and Scripturally tells sinners what they must do to be saved. Hence, we often hear people protesting against what they call doctrinal preaching, meaning preaching that tells poor, lost and ruined sinners how to become Christians. By "doctrinal preaching," as ordinarily used among men—especially as used by men who seriously object to what the Bible says alien sinners must do to be saved—is at least frequently meant the only kind of preaching that can be directly and personally applicable to souls out of Christ.
Is it not marvelously mysterious and mysteriously marvelous that any man of sufficient intelligence to be responsible in the sight of God, believing the Bible to be the Word of God, will object to any preacher's telling dying men, women and children how to come into the kingdom, or church, of Christ, that they may have the right to call God their Father, Christ their Savior and heaven their eternal home?

Regardless of this prejudice against "doctrinal preaching," Gospel preaching, God demands of his preachers just that sort of preaching; and there is not a Gospel preacher on earth who should not be brave enough to preach the Gospel at the peril of his life. God would not recognize him as his worthy child, would not recognize him as a faithful minister of the Word, if not brave enough to preach the Gospel, in its primitive purity and sweet, sublime simplicity, regardless of the bitter prejudice the world cherishes against it, even though it cost him his life.

Let us, then, turn to the word of the living God for the answer to this question as propounded by an alien sinner simply wanting to know what to do to become a Christian, to become a member of the "house"—household, family, church—of God, "the pillar and ground of the truth."
Our Savior, just before his ascension—Bethlehem behind him, Gethsemane behind him—his painful pilgrimage of a third of a century behind him—clothed with all power—authority—in heaven and earth, his disciples around him, angels waiting to waft him home to glory,—said to his disciples: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 15, 16). In this language of the loving Lord himself, spoken in the supreme moment of his life, when he was just ready to return home, to be coronated King of kings and Lord of lords, we have the answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Then, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—pardoned—as certainly as the Savior told the truth just before his ascension, when he said so.

Now, just for the present, passing by heaven’s statute books, the Gospel records, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the eighty-nine chapters of which constitute the statute books of heaven in force now, we come to Acts of Apostles, the book of conversions, which book shows clearly and
plainly exactly how the great commission was understood by those to whom it was addressed, and clearly reveals heaven's application of it.

In the second chapter of Acts of Apostles we find a clear account, and, in part, a verbatim report, of the first sermon ever preached under the great commission—the first Gospel-in-fact sermon ever preached, the facts of the Gospel being the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Fifty days after the crucifixion of Christ, the Apostle Peter, to whom Jesus then committed the keys of the kingdom, preached to an immense multitude of people, murderers of Christ. He convinced thousands of them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, convinced and convicted them of the crime of murdering God's Son, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" That is "What shall we do to escape condemnation because of this awful, cruel crime? The blood of the Son of God stains our souls, practically drips from our hands. What shall we do? What shall we do to be saved from all our past and present sins?" "Then Peter [therefore the Holy Spirit; since, filled with the Spirit, he spake as the Spirit gave him utterance] said unto them, Repent, and be baptized,
every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts ii. 38).

In the ninth, the twenty-second and the twenty-sixth chapters of Acts of Apostles we have the divine record, report, of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, subsequently the Apostle Paul. He was on his way to Damascus, with letters from the High Priest authorizing him to arrest, and bring bound unto Jerusalem, all Christians he might find there. Suddenly, “about noon,” a light shone “round about” him. He asked, “Who art thou, Lord?” The Lord answered him, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecuteth.” Believing this, he said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” as if he had said, “Lord, what must I do to be saved from my sins? I have persecuted thee, in persecuting thy church. I have dragged many of thy disciples to prisons dreary and dungeons dark, and have driven some to blasphemy and to death. I shall be recognized through time and through eternity as the chief of sinners, because of these pitiless persecutions. What shall I do? What must I do? What wilt thou have me to do?” Jesus said unto him, “Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”
He arose, went into Damascus, and remained there, blind, believing, penitent, fasting, praying, three days and nights. Then God sent Ananias, an inspired preacher, to him. Ananias, finding him in proper condition, in every respect, to complete his obedience, said to him, God having restored his sight, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts xxii. 16). Saul asked Jesus personally, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The Lord told him, plainly and positively, to go into the city, and it should be told him what he must do. God sent one of his own inspired servants to Saul, to tell him what he must do; and the instruction given by that inspired servant of God was backed by all the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and of Jehovah himself—by all the authority of the Divine Three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The Philippian jailer, of whom we read in Acts xvi., a great earthquake having just miraculously manifested the presence and power of Providence, asked, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul and Silas, inspired servants of the living God, inspired Gospel preachers, answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts xvi. 31).
Carefully considering all these things in the light of truth divine, we find that, in answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” as propounded by alien sinners, heaven teaches them to hear the Gospel, believe the Gospel, repent of their sins, and be baptized. Having honestly, earnestly and sincerely done all these things, they are saved from all their past and present—but not future—sins, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated “into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.”

By referring to another case of conversion, where the question now under consideration was not plainly propounded, but where the desire to know the way of salvation was evidently present, we find the Scriptural form of phraseology, by which penitent believers may make application for admittance to the ordinance of baptism. This is clearly revealed and plainly recorded in Acts viii. 26-39: “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert [that is, the old, uninhabited, desolate Gaza, not the new, inhabited Gaza by the seaside]. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who
had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life was taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and
they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Now, carefully and correctly combining the commission and all these clear cases of conversion, and conscientiously considering them, as duty clearly demands, we find the complete and perfect answer, the divine answer, to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" as propounded by alien sinners. This answer authorizes and requires every Gospel preacher to tell poor, lost and ruined sinners, if they will hear the Gospel, believe the Gospel, honestly, earnestly and sincerely repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ—that is, confess with their mouth that they do believe, with all the heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—be buried with him in baptism into death, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, into the solemn name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and be raised up to walk in newness of life, their past and present sins shall all be washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and shall be remembered against them no more forever. They are thus then and there born again, born from above, "born of water and of the Spirit," born into the house,
household, family, church of God. Therefore they are Christians, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, children of the Heavenly King, soldiers of the cross, sheep of the flock, lambs of the fold of the tender Shepherd of souls; and, if they die then, are just as safe for glory, honor and immortality as angels in the presence of God. If they subsequently live here, however, even forty, fifty, sixty or seventy years, they must live the Christian life, "be faithful unto death," to be positively certain to be eternally saved.

God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, to die for the redemption of our race. Jesus so tenderly loved, and sincerely sympathized with the suffering sons and daughters of men that he willingly endured privations and poverty, as the waylaid, persecuted Man of sorrows and Friend of sinners, died on Calvary's cross and slept in the solemn silence of a borrowed tomb three days and three nights, from whence he rose, a triumphant conqueror, the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings, to flood the world with light divine and lift our souls to God. And now, in the lovelight of God's eternal truth, he stands and pleads with you, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Jesus invites you. Heaven is ready to welcome you. Children of the living God are praying daily that you may come to Christ, and it is left for you to decide whether you will stay away from Jesus and run the risk of being eternally lost, or come to him and be saved. May the Lord bless you in forming the right resolve, without delay.

II.

In a previous examination of this subject, each of four of the passages of Scripture quoted was, and is, an answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The Savior, just before his ascension, said to his disciples, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 15, 16). This is the great commission under which all gospel preachers have labored from the birthday of the church of Christ to the present, and under which all gospel preachers are to
and to which all loyal gospel preachers are to be true, till time shall cease to be.

Leaving the gospel records, and going to the book of conversions—Acts of Apostles—we found that, when, on the day of Pentecost, the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Christ, the Apostle Peter preached to a vast multitude of people—the murderers of Christ—and convinced many of them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—evidently wanting to know what to do to be saved—he said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38).

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, subsequently the Apostle Paul—recorded in the ninth, twenty-second and twenty-sixth chapters of Acts of Apostles—was next considered. We found that, when, on his way to Damascus, hunting Christians, that he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem, a bright light suddenly shone 'round about him, he fell to the earth, was made literally blind, and asked, "Who art thou Lord?" The Lord said unto him, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

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Then he asked, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” and the Lord answered him, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” He went into the city, and remained there in a blind, believing, penitent, praying, fasting condition, three days. Then God sent to him Ananias, an inspired preacher, to fulfill the promise of the Savior, “It shall be told thee what thou must do.” God, through Ananias, wrought a miracle, restoring sight to Saul, and then Ananias, knowing his condition, said to him, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts xxii. 16).

Then we considered the conversion of the Philippian jailer—Acts xvi. 16-34—who propounded to Paul and Silas the question under consideration: “What must I do to be saved?” to which question they replied: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

A difficulty may arise, and confusion may remain, in the minds of thinking people because these answers—being answers to practically the same question—are not all exactly alike. Indeed, no two of them are exactly alike. The Savior said to his disciples, when he commissioned them to preach the gospel: “He that believeth and
is baptized shall be saved.” The Apostle Peter said to thousands, on the first Pentecost after the death of Christ, in answer to the question “What shall we do?” “Repent and be baptized.” Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins; and that very man, Saul, said to the Philippian jailer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

So, then, we have found four answers to the question, no two exactly alike; and it seems that our investigation tends to confuse, instead of enlighten, the mind. There is, however, no real reason for confusion here; and if we are led into, and kept in confusion, it is because we fail to have a proper understanding, or conception, of the circumstances under which each of these various answers was given. If we understand each answer to be a part of the entire answer to the great question, each one applicable to the case under consideration when it was given, we see that they harmonize perfectly.

We could never be confused about anything of a temporal character as simple as this. A father and mother have brought up to manhood four sons. Their sons are a fair average of the young men of the land, except that each one has a very
grievous fault, a serious sin, that dis-
counts him so heavily as to place him de-
cidedly below the average. One is dis-
gustingly profane, one is a thief, one is
a drunkard, and one is a liar. These faults
are all voluntary, all willful on their part.
Of course it is not necessary for any mor-
tal to be profane. It is not necessary for
any mortal to be a thief; it is not neces-
sary for any mortal to be a drunkard; it
is not necessary for any mortal to be so
much like Satan as to be a liar. So, these
young men, by the practice of these griev-
ous faults, these shameful sins, willfully
and voluntarily bring and hold themselves
below the level of the young men of the
land.

Their father is a good man, and is unhap-
happy because his sons are not what he
wants them to be. He longs to see them
perfect. He is in a dying condition, and,
like Jacob of old, he calls his sons to his
bedside, to talk to them. He is utterly
heartbroken and distressed. He says:
"My sons, your father is going to the grave
in sorrow because of your waywardness,
and the thought that troubles me most is
that, while I am going to heaven, you are
going to perdition, and I can have no
hope of ever meeting you in that world
that is better and brighter than this. I
an distressed in the hour of death, because I fear you, my sons, are to suffer eternal death.”

The young men realize that their father is dying, and that he is deeply distressed because of their waywardness. Their consciences are aroused, they are intensely excited, and each one says: “Father, what must I do? What must I do to be saved?” The excitement having somewhat subsided, one of the sons says: “Father, what must I do to be saved? You are troubled and heartbroken. I can not bear to see you so distressed because of my condition. What must I do to be saved?” His father says: “My son, if you would be saved, you must quit your profanity.” The son says, “Father, I will. I’ll quit swearing. I’ll never speak the name of the Lord in vain again. I’ll avoid all slang, by-words, and rough, unkind expressions.”

The second son says: “Father, what must I do to be saved?” The father says: “My son, if you would be saved, you must quit stealing.” He says: “Father, I solemnly promise you that I will never steal another penny—never again steal. I’ll work. I never did like to work; but I’ll work hereafter. I’ll steal no more.”

The third son says: “Father, what must I do to be saved?” His father says: “My
son, you must quit drinking.” The son promises, “I will. I have never been drunk except when I voluntarily drank something intoxicating. I’ll never again drink anything that can intoxicate; therefore I’ll never be drunk again.”

The fourth son says: “Father, what must I do to be saved?” His father says: “You must tell the truth, my son, and nothing but the truth. You must be truthful.” The son says: “Father, I’ve been out of practice so long I fear I can not hold out. I’d rather never try to tell the truth than to try and fail. I’d rather be an honest liar than a hypocrite.” His father says: “My son, promise your dying father you’ll quit lying.” The young man replies: “Father, I’ve done nothing else so long, I’m afraid I can not quit.” The father is deeply distressed, and says: “My son, your salvation depends upon it. I can die happy, if you will only promise me to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, as long as you live.” The young man says: “Father, I promise you I’ll not lie any more. I’m afraid to promise to tell the truth; but I’ll simply quit talking till I study the matter over—till I get into such a mental and moral condition that I can talk without lying. So, I promise you I’ll never lie any more while the world stands.”
The next day a wonderful change is observed in the conduct of the young men, but it is a change very decidedly for the worse. The one who was so exceedingly and disgustingly profane doesn't swear—uses no profane, rough or impure language—but he steals, gets drunk, and lies. So with the other three. Each one has abandoned his one bad habit and taken up the other three. On an average, therefore, each one is threefold worse than he was before.

A good, respectable citizen reproaches the young men for their degeneracy—for retrograding so rapidly—and asks for an explanation. One of them says: "I can explain the situation to your satisfaction, I think. I can answer for myself, and my answer will be, practically, the answer of all of us. We are doing this to be saved. Father told us how to be saved. I asked him, in language that could not be mistaken, 'Father, what must I do to be saved?' He said, 'Quit swearing—quit profanity.' I've quit, because I want to be saved; but, while I'm going to heaven, I want to have a good time here. If I happen to find anything lying around loose, and can put it where it will do some good, I expect to do it, if I can do it without being 'caught.' If I am 'dry,' and can find
something to make me feel good, I'll take a drink, and then take as many more as I feel like taking. If I get closely cornered, and the truth doesn't serve my purpose, I'll tell a lie. I'm not going to swear any more, however, for I want to be saved. When I asked my father what to do to be saved, he said: ‘Son, quit your profanity—quit swearing.’ Wherefore, that we are justified, sanctified and saved by refraining from profanity alone is, to me, a wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort and fun.”

Now, if we can tell what is the trouble with these boys, we can harmonize the seemingly inconsistent, bewildering, confusing answers we have found in the sacred Scriptures—answers to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” What is the trouble with the boys? Each one thinks of self alone, and fails to understand that their father, knowing the grave faults of each of his sons, answered the question of each according to the condition of the one who propounded it. He told the thief to quit stealing, because he knew that son needed that advice. He did not tell his honest boys to quit stealing, because they needed no such advice. He gave each boy the advice that boy needed. All the answers put together make the
complete and perfect answer to the real question, then under consideration, viz: "Father, what must your sons do to be saved?" When one abandoned the habit that marred his character, he should not have taken up the faults of the other three, or any one of them. Then, all would have been free from profanity, theft, drunkenness and falsehood, as the father so sincerely desired and so earnestly requested. Moreover, they would then have been saved, if following their father's advice insured salvation.

The same principle applies to the four passages of sacred Scripture we have considered—the four answers we have found to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" as propounded by alien sinners. By putting the four answers together, we get the complete and perfect answer to the question—the answer that God's preachers are required to preach—the answer that all gospel preachers do preach. Now let us go back to heaven's statute book and see. Matthew records the commission thus: "Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you al-
way, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). They were to teach the people, baptize the taught, and teach the baptized to live the Christian life. Baptism is the one condition of pardon expressed in the commission as recorded by Matthew.

The Savior said, as Mark records: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 15, 16). Here, belief, or faith, and baptism are expressed as conditions of pardon. Matthew, in the commission, says nothing about faith. It does not follow, however, that therefore faith has nothing to do with pardon. “Without faith, it is impossible to please him” (Heb. xi. 6). “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. xiv. 28).

Luke says the Savior said: “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). So, then, Luke, in the commission, says nothing about faith and nothing about baptism. Shall we therefore concede, claim and contend that repentance
is the only condition of pardon? Neither Matthew nor Mark says anything about repentance, in the commission; but we can not claim that repentance has, therefore, nothing to do with remission of sins or salvation; for Luke says the Savior told his disciples that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Putting all these inspired statements together, we have faith, repentance and baptism—not one of them alone, but all of them together—for the remission of sins.

The Bible tells us how a penitent believer made application for baptism. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip,
that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts viii: 35-39).

Putting all these together, then, we find that God teaches alien sinners to hear the gospel, believe the gospel, honestly and earnestly repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ—that is, confess with the mouth that they do believe with all the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; be buried with him by baptism into death, and raised up to walk in newness of life. He guarantees that they shall then be recognized as his own beloved in the Lord, having thus been born again, born from above, born of water and of the Spirit, born into the house, household, family, church, of the living God; and if they live right the remnant of their days, they have the positive promise of everlasting life.

If they sin, they "have an advocate with the Father," even "Jesus Christ the righteous." They have the right to ask forgiveness of God, their Father, having been born into his family. He was their Creator and Benefactor before they were born again; but they have been born into his church, house, household, family, and have the right to call him Father. They have divine assurance that if they confess their sins to him, he will pardon all their
transgressions. John, writing to Christians, members of the family of God, wrote: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The various answers we have considered are parts of the one complete answer to the question as propounded by alien sinners, "What must I do to be saved?" By referring to the book of conversions—Acts of Apostles—we can see how the apostles understood the commission given them by the Savior. Wherever we find cases of conversion recorded there, we find that all these conditions are present, either positively expressed or clearly implied.

In the second chapter of Acts of Apostles, we are told that the Apostle Peter said to the people, on the day of Pentecost, in answer to the question, "What shall we do?" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that
gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 38-41). Nothing is said here about faith—only repentance and baptism are expressed as the conditions of pardon; but faith is clearly implied. Neither repentance nor baptism can be acceptable in the sight of God without faith. Neither one nor both together can please God without faith, for "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23), and "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. xi. 6). It is perfectly clear that the repentance and baptism of these people pleased God, for they resulted in "the remission of sins," and he admitted those who were baptized into his church, or family, they thus becoming God's children, the Bible being true.

It follows, then, that faith is as clearly implied, in this case, as repentance and baptism are expressed. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." The Apostle Peter, possessing the keys of the kingdom, and filled with the Holy Spirit, would not have told those who were seeking salvation to sin "for the remission of sin." But without faith, their repentance and baptism must have been sin, the Bible being true. It follows therefore, as certainly as reason...
is reason, revelation is revelation, and truth is truth, just so certainly they had faith. Peter had preached Christ to them; quoted sacred Scripture, to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. They believed him, and manifested their belief, their faith, by asking, "What shall we do?" He said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Why did he not tell them, in the answer to that question, to believe? For the very same reason the father of the four sons did not tell his honest boys to quit stealing—they needed not that advice. They had already believed, but they had not repented, or been baptized. Therefore the Apostle Peter told them to repent and be baptized "for the remission of sins." They did so, thus completing their obedience, and rejoiced in the hope of everlasting life.

In the conversion of the Ethiopian officer we find the same conditions of pardon. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and
said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." We have here a clear proof that the Ethiopian officer believed. He said he did; and Philip evidently believed he told the truth. The Bible tells us he confessed his faith in Christ and was baptized, and his repentance is not expressed; but, between the moment when he first believed with all the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the moment when he was baptized in his name, there was, of course, a determination in his heart to abandon anything or everything Christ condemns and heaven requires sinners to abandon, and this was, of itself, repentance. So we have, in this case, faith and baptism clearly expressed, and repentance just as clearly implied.

In the inspired account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus the same conditions are made clear. When the Savior appeared to him, as he was on his way to Damascus, he asked: "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord answered him, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." The sacred record shows that, from that day to the day of his death, Saul believed in Jesus of Nazareth with all his
His next question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" in connection with his entire subsequent career, proves his repentance. Instead of the storm of hatred and fury that had previously filled his heart against the disciples of the Lord, there was an earnest, submissive, sincere desire 'to do whatsoever Jesus of Nazareth would have him do, which bore "fruits meet for repentance all the remnant of his days." The Lord said to him, "Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Three days after that, Ananias came to him; in fulfillment of that promise, and, Saul having received sight—his sight having been restored—said to him, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16). He was already a believer, hence Ananias did not tell him to believe. For a similar reason, Ananias did not tell him to repent. He had been in Damascus in a blind, believing, penitent, praying, fasting condition three days and nights. There was only one more step to be taken. Therefore Ananias said to him: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." In the record of his conversion, we find baptism ex-
pressed and faith and repentance clearly implied.

In the sacred report of the conversion of the Philippian jailer, we find all the conditions of pardon either expressed or clearly implied. He asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Why did they tell him to believe? Because he did not believe. He was a pagan who had, almost certainly, never heard Christ preached. He had not heard "the word of the Lord;" and it was, therefore, not possible for him to believe in Christ, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Paul knew then, as well as he knew when he wrote the letter to the Romans, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Before that pagan jailer and his household could believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they must hear the word of God. So Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in
God with all his house." The faith of that pagan jailer and every member of his family is positively expressed. His baptism and that of his household is also clearly expressed; and their repentance is just as clearly implied; for, between the faith and the baptism, there must, of necessity, have been a bowing of the spirit of each in meek submission to God's holy will, and this is repentance. Hence, in this case, faith and baptism are clearly expressed, and repentance is just as clearly implied.

So, then, from the first record of the commission to the last record in the book of conversions—covering the first five books of the New Testament—there is not the slightest discrepancy regarding the conditions of pardon for alien sinners. As a result of this investigation, we reach the conclusion that, as certainly as God is God and Christ is Christ and truth is truth, just so certainly if alien sinners hear the gospel, believe the gospel, honestly and earnestly repent of their sins—that is, resolve, by the grace of God, to abandon sin and Satan and serve the Lord—confess with the mouth that they do believe, with all the heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and are buried with him by baptism into death, in the name of Jesus Christ, into the solemn name of Father,

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Son and Holy Spirit, they are in the family—house, household, or church—of the living God, at the end of that obedience. All their past and present sins—present till obedience is rendered—are washed away in the blood of the Lamb. They are as safe, if they die when they complete that obedience, as the angels and archangels around the eternal throne of God.

If they live weeks and months and years after they thus obey, they always have positive, divine guarantee of everlasting blessedness, if they live the Christian life. If, however, they sin, as they are sure to do; if they repent of their sin or sins, and pray to God, their Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Savior, for forgiveness, confessing their sin or sins to him, he will forgive and forget the wrong they have done, and love them as fully and freely as if they had never sinned. If they continue to live faithful, they have assurance that, when the earth claims their bodies, heaven will claim them, and they shall be gathered in safety home; with all the redeemed of every age, country and clime, be crowned with glory, honor and immortality, and be made unspeakably happy with God forever.

Nothing can be simpler, nothing can be plainer than this. It is as plain and simple
We as God, Christ and the Holy Spirit can make it. We can all readily and easily comprehend it, if we will. You can accept heaven’s offer of mercy through Jesus Christ, our Lord, if you will. “Choose ye, this day, whom ye will serve;” and remember, glory, honor and immortality are involved in your choice. May the Lord bless you in doing what duty demands. It may be some of you have wandered away from the post of duty, as the prodigal of old wandered away from his father’s house. If so, you can never have a better opportunity to return to your first love than you have now. Jesus is ready to receive you, and the angels in heaven would rejoice to see the prodigal return home in the long-ago. If you are an alien sinner, this is a golden opportunity for you to come to Christ. God offers you peace, pardon, comfort, consolation and providential protection in this world—glory, honor and immortality in the world of unalloyed bliss above—if you will only come to Jesus and serve him faithfully as long as life may last. May the Lord bless you in coming to the path of peace, to the post of duty, without delay.
III.

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning: and, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter: and, like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth; in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip
opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And, as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts viii. 26-39).

This beautiful, instructive, sweetly and sublimely simple passage of sacred Scripture suggests that Providence may plan for the salvation of souls when they are neither seeking, thinking of nor dreaming of salvation. It also suggests that our duty is so clearly revealed in the Book of God that we absolutely can not misunderstand it, if we will to understand it, that we may do it. No responsible soul can carefully, honestly and diligently study this story of the conversation of the secretary of the treasury of Ethiopia and fail to understand it.
At the time the events narrated in this passage of scripture occurred, the New Testament had not been written; hence people did not have access to the gospel then as we have access to it now, through the plainly revealed, written and printed will of the Lord Almighty constituting the New Testament. Hence, miracles were wrought, from time to time, to bring about the conversion of souls. Every miracle wrought for that purpose suggested, and still suggests, heaven’s sympathy for souls, God’s interest in the salvation of the sons and daughters of men. For a reason known to himself, but not revealed to us, God resolved that one of those miracles should lead to the conversion of the man referred to in the Scripture just quoted; and, from the beginning to the end of this case of conversion, it clearly shows that God intended to give, and therefore did give, us a case so simple and so clear that no responsible soul having access to it, and being able to read it, could ever have a real reason for not understanding it.

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip” is the way the story begins. Angels are spoken of frequently in the sacred Scriptures, and occasionally the “angel of the Lord” is referred to. “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these
things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16). "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those who fear him, and delivereth them" (Psa. xxxiv. 7). In this case we are told that "the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert;" that is, the Gaza that is not inhabited. God's directions to men are, and have always been, plain, simple and specific, hence easily understood; and his directions to Philip, delivered by "the angel of the Lord," were so plain that he could not misunderstand them. There were two Gazas in that country then, as history, both sacred and secular, teaches; one on a plateau, twenty or thirty miles from the Mediterranean Sea; the other—the new Gaza—built by the people who abandoned the old Gaza, on the Mediterranean coast, the old Gaza being then left uninhabited, desolate, or, as we are plainly informed in the lesson now under consideration, "desert." Before it was abandoned, a highway was built from Jerusalem "down" to the old Gaza, every way from Jerusalem being "down." Subsequently a road leading from Jerusalem to the new Gaza was made.
If the angel had simply said to Philip, "Arise, and go toward the south," he could have traveled in a southerly direction; but he could not have been absolutely certain he was doing exactly what God wanted him to do, so far as any special place or point was concerned. If the angel had said, "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza," Philip would have been bewildered; for there were two Gazas and a road from Jerusalem to each of them; and it could not have been possible, without additional instruction, or revelation, for Philip to know exactly where God wished him to go. God has never left man in such a condition of uncertainty as to what he has demanded that man should do. With as much care as intelligent, loving mothers manifest in teaching their little ones, with as much consideration as teachers exercise in instructing their pupils, but with infinitely greater wisdom, tenderer love and mightier power, God teaches through divine, revealed truth, the sons and daughters of men the way to everlasting life. Before his written revelation to man was complete, however, he taught through other means, as in the case we now have under consideration. "The angel

If the Lord spake unto Philip, saying,
Ari se, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert." Then Philip knew exactly what to do—where to go.

Does some sincere soul say, "It was not Gaza, but that country that was desert"? There is no allusion in this language to that country's being desert. Indeed, neither that country nor any other country is even so much as mentioned in the entire story, except that Ethiopia is incidentally mentioned in the language, "And, behold, a man of Ethiopia." Moreover, that country is not, and never has been between then and now, desert; and if it had been desert then, it would have been useless to tell Philip so, for that was his own country, and a very small country, and he would have known it was desert, if it had been desert. There are no non-essentials in God's Book. Men make books that abound in non-essentials, some that are entirely non-essential; but divinity avoids all such manifestations of the weakness of humanity. There is absolutely nothing in the language to which the clause, "which is desert," can refer, except "Gaza." Do you say, "Some writers say the older Gaza was still inhabited then"? The Bible says it was "desert," whatsoever that may mean, and that settles that with all who believe
the testimony of the Spirit on the subject. When the angel told Philip to "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert," he knew exactly where to go.

"And he arose and went." That is what he was commanded to do; that is what he did. There was no hesitation, no procrastination, no indecision; any or all of which would have been a manifestation of a lack of confidence in God and respect for his will. "He arose and went" toward the south, till he reached the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza which was "desert"—the old Gaza that had been either entirely depopulated, or so nearly so that the Holy Spirit says it was "desert." The Bible is a book of wondrous thoughts expressed in few words. "And he arose and went"—only five words; but from these five words we can readily understand why he went, which way he went, where he went. "And he arose and went." This is exactly what we should do when God directs us, not miraculously, but through his truth, to go anywhere, to do anything—arise, go, do. When we read or hear the truth, we should try to understand it, and then immediately do whatever we are therein directed to do.
“And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.” That man was a Jew. He may not have been a Hebrew. Not all Hebrews are Jews. Not all Jews are Hebrews. A Hebrew is a lineal descendant of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob. A Jew is one who believes, accepts and practices Judaism. Some Hebrews have abandoned Judaism, and are, therefore, not Jews. Some Gentiles have been proselyted to Judaism, and are, therefore, Jews, but not Hebrews. It is positively certain that this man was a Jew. He had gone from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship. None but Jews went to Jerusalem, to worship, then. Christians worshiped at Jerusalem, when there, of course; but did not journey to Jerusalem for that purpose. Moreover, all Christians—the apostles excepted—had then been driven away from Jerusalem by persecution.

“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea
and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts viii. 1). This is a part of the very chapter in which the story we now have under consideration is recorded. Christians, then, "all" of them except the apostles, were traveling away from, not to, Jerusalem. None but Jews and Christians read, respected or possessed the writings of the prophets. This man possessed and respected the writings of Esaias the prophet. (Acts viii. 28.) He was not a Christian. Hence he was a Jew; and, therefore, opposed to Christ, Christianity and Christians.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to his chariot." The Holy Spirit then took charge of the case, and remained with him, evidently superintending and directing till the work was done—therefore divinely done. Let us, therefore, be careful how we handle this case, lest we sin against "the angel of the Lord; Jehovah, Jesus and the Holy Spirit!" "The angel of the Lord" first, then the Holy Spirit, directed Philip, the Lord Almighty directing both. If we despise, reject, criticise adversely, or ignore this clear case of conversion, are we not in imminent danger of being eternally damned for willfully sinning against God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and "the angel of
the Lord" from heaven? It is a fearful thing to despise the word of the Lord. "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Prov. xiii. 13).

If Philip had not obeyed the instructions of God delivered by the angel of the Lord, he had not been on the road that led to "Gaza which is desert;" and, of course, the Holy Spirit had not appeared to him there. Just so, if we willfully refuse to do anything God demands that we do, we have no right to expect him to bestow upon us blessings that he has promised to none but the obedient. We should study to know what God wills us to do, and do it. Each should ask self, "What does God command me to do?" Every responsible soul should, in sincerity, ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" If we ask that question with a sincere desire to know the will of the Lord, that we may do it, we shall surely know what the will of the Lord, in answer thereto, is; and when we know his will, we should do it. If we willfully refuse to do what we know God wills us to do, he may justly doom us for rebellion against his authority. Therefore, "let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

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For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. xii. 13. 14).

God first sent "the angel of the Lord" to Philip, to tell him what to do; and, when he had done that, then, and not till then, the Holy Spirit appeared on the scene, to accompany, direct and assist him. If Philip had not done what the angel of the Lord told him to do, it had been contrary to both reason and revelation to expect the Holy Spirit to appear, to direct or otherwise recognize or assist him. Why expect the Holy Spirit to direct or otherwise recognize a man who positively refused to do what the angel of the Lord told him to do? We should apply that to ourselves. If God tells us, in his Word, to do a certain thing, and we refuse or fail to do it, we have neither right nor reason to expect him to confer upon us blessings that come to responsible souls through, and only through, obedience to his commands.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him reading the prophet Esajas, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?" This question may, in this false, fastidious age, seem to be a manifestation of im-
proper presumption on the part of Philip. But if we could understand the feeling that filled and thrilled his heart, and realize the interest he felt in the salvation of souls, we might almost absolutely know the shadow of self-esteem was not there. He knew it was his duty to "rescue the perishing," and he also knew the everlasting salvation of that homeward-bound traveler, if not indeed of millions and billions of responsible souls, might depend on the very work in which, by divine direction and demand, he was then engaged. He was not seeking worldly gain or glory, not trying to propagate his own opinions, or personal preferences, not trying to sustain or popularize party or partyism; but sympathizing with souls, loving Christ and his cause, he was bravely and faithfully doing what duty demanded. So, when he found the Ethiopian officer reading a copy of the prophecy of Esaias, he said to him: "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

The Ethiopian officer answered: "How can I, except some man guide me?" This answer clearly understands what we might unerringly understand even without this: that God selected as the special subject of his attention the one worthy of such divine attention. That man occupied a high position, was the secretary of the Eth-
oplan treasury; but, notwithstanding this, when that poor pedestrian, that simple, sublime preacher of the Gospel, asked him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" with the modest humility and sweet simplicity of an innocent little child, he said: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" He was not afraid to come into close contact with a child of poverty. He was not afraid his official, semi-royal robes might be contaminated by the touch of the dusty garments of that humble pedestrian.

Utterly unable to understand, without additional light, the thrilling story of the crucifixion he was reading, and, as an honest man, sincerely desiring to understand it, he wanted Philip to instruct him. He was in the proper frame of mind, had a good and honest heart, and was truly anxious to know the will of the Lord. When people have good and honest hearts, and sincerely desire to know the will of the Lord, that they may do it, it is easy, pleasant, delightful, to teach them. They are not looking for flies in the ointment, for apparent discrepancies, inconsistencies, or contradictions or mistakes. They are not criticising the grammar, the logic, the theoretic, the oratory of those who "preach the Word" to save their souls. They long
to know the will of the Lord, that they may do it. Sincerely desiring to serve the Lord, they will do his will, for the glory of God, the honor of Christ and the salvation of souls. It is not hard for any Gospel preacher to lead such souls into the fold of Christ. The Ethiopian officer was in that condition. He frankly acknowledged that he did not understand the Scripture he was reading, “and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him”—ride with him in the chariot—thus affording Philip an opportunity to explain to him the Scripture he was reading—Scripture the New Testament, written since then, makes so exceedingly plain.

“The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter: and, like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.” This Scripture is part of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It refers to the crucifixion of Christ, our blessed Savior, always loving and kind, tender-hearted, sympathetic and true, who suffered as man has never suffered, and died on the cruel cross for the redemption of a
lost and ruined and recreant race, God himself, as Jesus died, withdrawing his presence, sympathy and support from his beloved Son, till his body ceased to suffer and to breathe, causing him to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that that Son, sinless and divine, might know, as his body sank down into the solemn silence and stillness of death, how a soul feels when sinking down into the depths of darkness and despair without God, hence without hope. He was not lost, of course, but God was not with him in the moment of death.

The Ethiopian officer did not know the Scripture he was reading referred to the Man of sorrows, the Friend of sinners, the Savior of souls, so he asked: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. On that important occasion, Philip, by divine direction, preached Jesus to the Ethiopian treasurer to whom Providence had directed him, finding theme and thoughts in the Sacred Scripture the treasurer was reading when he was sent by the Spirit to him. So far as the divine record shows—and we have no right to affirm what is not in the record—Philip preached to his distin-
guished auditor Jesus—only Jesus. Therefore whatsoever that preaching influenced Ethiopia's fortunate treasurer to do, the preaching of Jesus by an inspired evangelist induced him to do. It follows, therefore, that preaching Jesus tends to induce people to do whatsoever he did. Certainly nothing can be clearer than this.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water." Philip did not detain the man he met on his way from Jerusalem. Evidently, he did not believe the Ethiopian officer was, under any obligation to him. It was joy to him, however, to do anything he could do to save that mighty man, or any other soul in danger of death eternal. It would have given him the same joy to save the humblest servant in the household of the queen whose treasurer that mighty man was. He wanted to save souls. So far as that man was concerned, it was Philip's sole desire to convert him from Judaism to Christianity, to induce him to become a follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene, Jesus, whom he preached to him, as they journeyed from Jerusalem. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was left to chance. God, "the angel of the Lord," the Holy Spirit and an inspired evangelist, planned, directed and did the work; hence all was
done perfectly, wisely and well. Christ was preached, the Gospel was obeyed, a soul was saved.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water;" a certain, definite, fixed water—a stream, lake or pool. It was evidently not the Mediterranean Sea, that was far away; for the road leading from Jerusalem to the new Gaza—the Gaza that was not a "desert"—was between the road they were traveling and the Mediterranean Sea, which was still farther to their right. We know it was a "certain," definite, fixed water; for the Bible tells us so. "And the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" From the preaching of Christ by Philip, he had learned that he ought to be baptized, and that water was necessary to his baptism; and, by the time they reached that "certain" water, he had resolved to obey the Gospel.

He was not sure, however, that he understood all the conditions. There might be something he had not learned that must be done. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This is the confession for making which Jesus was nailed to the cross; the confession for...
making which, and then living according to all that is implied in it and the making of it, we are promised everlasting life; the confession that Gospel preachers take from penitent believers when they make application for baptism: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

"And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

The instruction in this story is so plain that it is not possible for us ever to fail to understand it, if we are responsible, can read plain English, and will to understand it. I would be willing to go to the judgment of Jehovah with that declaration on my lips, with that sentiment in my heart. God himself could not have made it plainer than he has made it. This shows his goodness, his mercy and his love, as well as his wisdom and his skill. God, as the Supreme Sovereign, had oversight of this conversion. He employed, as agents cooperating with him, "the angel of the Lord" and an inspired evangelist, thus practically bringing heaven and earth to.
gether. When the inspired evangelist had done as, what, and all God, through the angel, directed him to do, God sent his Spirit to the preacher, to direct him. God, through the Spirit, Christ through the Spirit, heaven through the Spirit, was present. Hence, God, Christ and the Holy Spirit—the divine three—of, in and from heaven—brought together the inspired evangelist, and the man who was to be saved, stayed with them till the work was done: till Philip preached Christ to the Ethiopian officer, till he believed in Christ and obeyed the Gospel. "Then the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" to another field of labor, and the Ethiopian officer went on his way rejoicing, home-ward bound, in hope of everlasting life.

What foundation for hope had he? He had done what, as and all the Lord directed him to do, to become a Christian. He knew, therefore, God being true, that he was a Christian. He was happy; but that was no evidence that he was a Christian. The divine assurance that he was a Christian made him happy. He had been taught, by divine authority, that if he obeyed the Gospel, he would thus become a child of God. He obeyed the Gospel, hence the divine assurance that he was a Christian, therefore had a divine right
to be happy, and "he went on his way rejoicing." To smile with contempt at this story, to be displeased with it, to turn away from it, to ignore it, is fearful, awful, terrible, dreadful. God himself perfected this case, and it is terrible in the extreme to turn away from it, to ignore it, to reject it, to ridicule it, to despise it. Nevertheless thousands who claim to be on their journey to God's eternal home deliberately and habitually do these very things. May the Lord have mercy on them.

Do you say you can not understand from this story, revealed by the Spirit, which one was baptized, Philip or the eunuch? If you are honest, it is not necessary for you to understand anything. The merciful Lord will take care of you. When nothing is given, nothing is required. If you are not sincere, remember you are ridiculing divinity, not humanity, when you talk that way. Do you say, "Christ went up into a mountain, but not into a hole in the ground; Zaccheus climbed up into a tree, but not into the hollow of the trunk of the tree"? Hence you do not believe Philip and the eunuch went down into, or came up out of the water. Neither did Ingersoll believe it; but those who believe the Bible believe it, for the Bible says it. This is (65).
not a question of climbing trees and mountains. It is a question of going down into, and coming up out of, water. Can you go down into water and not go down into it? Can you come up out of water and not come up out of it? These are the questions under consideration now. Let us be careful to not ridicule the Holy Spirit and reject the word of the Lord.

Do you say God is not as good to us as he was to the Ethiopian officer, does not give us such a chance for conversion, does not show such an interest in us? You are mistaken if you think thus. It is true that he sends no angel to us or to a preacher, to send him to preach Christ to us. It is true that the Holy Spirit does not come and speak directly to us or to a preacher, directing him to preach the gospel to us; but we have all the revelation the Ethiopian officer had, and much more. We have the New Testament, filled with the love of the Lord and tinged with the blood of the Lamb, throwing its blessed light into our hearts. We can read and understand and know what the will of the Lord is in reference to our salvation, and do what he commands us to do, if we will.

The age of miracles has passed. Until the house is completed, the temporary scaffolding around it is useful, important,
essential. When all is done—when the last touch of the painter’s brush has been given and the work is all complete—the scaffolding may be removed. It has served its purpose. So also miracles. His revelation not being complete, God sent an angel to cause the conversion of this Ethiopian treasurer. Conversion, however, has never been a miracle. The assumption that conversion is a miracle is one of the world’s greatest mistakes. It has prevented many a precious soul’s enjoying the bliss of Christianity and the hope of everlasting life. Conversion is not, and never has been, a miracle. God, in times past, sometimes wrought miracles, to cause conversion, as in this case. The part performed by “the angel of the Lord,” also the part performed by the Spirit, was miraculous, of course, these two miracles bringing Philip, the preacher, and the man to be converted, together; but when they were brought together, Philip taught the unsaved man the plain, simple truth, just as we have it revealed in the New Testament, and thus turned him, converted him, from Judaism to Christianity, buried him in baptism, and raised him up to walk in newness of life.

God is no respecter of persons. Before the New Testament was written, he did
what was necessary to fill the place it now fills, to do the work it now does. We have this story simply told, have God's will completely revealed. We can read it, or hear it read, if we will. If any question or any doubt arises in our minds, we can read it or hear it read again; and the oftener we read it or hear it read, the more we rejoice, if we properly appreciate it, and, therefore, live as it directs. Those who love the truth rejoice to hear it, and those who know it best to hear it most.

The Ethiopian officer "went on his way rejoicing" because of divine assurance that he was a child of God. The Lord instructed him, through the truth, to do certain things to become his child. He did those things, and hence he could say: "I am saved from my past sins. I have been divinely taught that, if I live the Christian life—a pure, chaste, clean, consistent life—till my temporal life shall cease, I shall be eternally saved. By the grace of God I shall live that life. I dwell in a palace now, am a trusted servant of royalty; but, beyond the service of this life, and beyond the palaces built by men, there is a palace built by the Lord Almighty. There is a 'city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God,' beyond the struggles of this life, where God,
Christ and the Holy Spirit are; where the redeemed are to be kings and priests unto God; where our joys shall never cease, where sorrow can never come. I am in Christ, I believe in him, I trust him, I love him, I am resolved to live the Christian life. So, then, whether I die before I reach my earthly home or live forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years, when done with this life I shall be done with all trouble, and shall go home, to live with my Savior and my God forever." No wonder he rejoiced!

We may all have this joy, if we will. Let those who have not done so obey the Gospel, then let all of us trust in God and do the right. Then, but not till then, can we "read our title clear to mansions in the skies," a title without blot or blur or blemish, and rejoice in the assurance that we shall be eternally saved; that all our loved ones who are prepared to die, therefore prepared to live, shall be saved, and that, with all the redeemed around the throne of God, we shall be eternally happy while the eternal ages roll their endless cycles on. May the Lord bless us all, that we may have this joy, the foundation for hope, and enjoy the fullest fruition of all our hallowed hopes and holy desires for.
ever. May he bless us, all we love and all who love us, in so living that some sweet day, beyond the shadows that fall across our pathway here, we may enter into that rest that remains to the people of God and spend eternity there. May the Lord bless us in being brave enough, loyal enough, true enough, to do whatever duty may demand, regardless of what this world may think or say or do. All who wish may know what God requires sinners to do, to become Christians. The way of salvation is made so plain that no responsible soul beneath the stars who sincerely wills and diligently endeavors to understand it can fail to understand it. If we are Christians, we can know just as easily and just as certainly what we must do to be eternally saved, and we know whether we are doing what God requires us to do, to secure life eternal.

Now may the Lord bless all who are in any sense subjects of the Gospel call in accepting it without delay. Remember, the loving Lord, long-suffering, compassionate, sympathetic, divine, begs you to come to him, to cast all your care upon him and trust him; to walk in his footsteps, live in harmony with his will, accept him as your Savior, and be faithful
unto death, that you may enter into the bliss of everlasting life. May the Lord bless you in accepting this call with a heroic determination to stand up for Jesus and battle for the right, though all the earth go wrong.