

What Constitutes a Christian?

**“To be called a Christian in our day,
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another as the poles.”**

J. W. Bowes

Introduction

The designation “Christian” has been used and misused for centuries to reference the whole of the diverse churches and beliefs that in one manner or another associate themselves with Jesus Christ. These churches are as different from one another as the East is from the West. For instance, Eastern Christianity consists of four main church families: the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox Church, The Assyrian Church of the East, and the Eastern Catholic Church. The terms Eastern and Orthodox are used in contrast with Western Christianity – namely the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Barrett, Kurian, Johnson; Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 2001), recognizes over 33,000 total “Christian” denominations. As the author of this pamphlet affirms, “To be called a Christian in our day, and for many preceding centuries, is but to become identified in some manner with any one of a thousand or inner forms of religious belief, divergent from one another as the poles.”

Yet the Bible, God’s message to mankind, speaks plainly and clearly that His Word was given by “inspiration” for our edification. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 declares that the *holy scriptures...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

We entreat you to read and consider this exposition – What Constitutes a Christian? – which we trust you will find to be presented in a straightforward and compelling style that is easy to follow. Though this study addresses a subject that many readers might consider fundamental, we trust that the material the author presents, addressing the rightful designation of the word “Christian” and emphasizing the primacy of faith and belief, will strengthen your understanding and appreciation for what the Scriptures declare a true Christian to be.

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What Constitutes a Christian?

The assertion has often been made that the Bible contains within its pages more surprises than any literary work extant. Particularly in two broad areas is this the case. First, as to what it does not teach, but is supposed to teach by general modern interpretation; and second, as a corollary to the first, the absence from its pages of various phrases which the world generally believes it to contain. Personally, I well remember my first disillusionment just about twenty-nine years ago, when I was informed that the word “immortal” could not be found anywhere in the Scriptures of truth in conjunction with, or as a preface to the word “soul,” in which manner it is so unlawfully and universally used in connection with the cardinal doctrine of all so-called evangelical churches. My surprise was further increased when my informant pointed out that the word “immortal” occurred only ONCE in the whole of the Bible. This was looked up, and found to be quite true, the instance being in Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy (1:17). It will be noted in passing that the word here used qualifies the nature of Deity, and not of man in any sense. Paul says: *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever* (1 Timothy 1:17).

The Truth Discovered

Now, I had read my Bible quite consistently for many years before this most important discovery was made. I say important, because it was one of the primary causes of my afterwards endeavoring to read the Bible with the avowed object of discovering what its actual teaching consisted of, with the most gratifying results I can assure you. I had many surprises before I got through, but the point I wish to make in this preamble is to emphasize the recognition of the fact that it is absolutely necessary that every seeker after truth should make a personal research of the Scriptures. They should apply themselves to the problem of discovering the Way, the Truth, and the Life untrammelled by preconceived ideas as to their actual teaching, not accepting dogmas simply because the church teaches it, when its spuriousness can be so easily proven by searching the Scriptures.

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A few days ago, when deciding on a title for this address, I was again mildly surprised, and it was this circumstance that brought up the reminiscences just recited of my first introduction to the Truth many years ago. The surprise came to me in the choosing of a suitable chapter as an introductory reading, and in the discovery that there are only three places in the Bible (all in the New Testament) in which the word “Christian”

occurs. This is most interesting to note, when we consider the great latitude with which the word is applied in our day, both individually and nationally. To me the circumstance seems providential that this particular word, "Christian," which was first used as a legitimate designation of the true followers of Christ, should appear so seldom in the writings of the apostles. It would appear that the Spirit of God, knowing beforehand the misuse that would be made of the term through its adoption by the great Apostasy, had selected other phrases and names by which His children would be known. To be called a Christian in our day, and for many preceding centuries, is but to become identified in some manner with any one of a thousand or inner forms of religious belief, divergent from one another as the poles, but all masquerading under a name that at one time for a brief period in the world's history stood for the highest and purest ideal ever presented to sinful man. **Research into past history would lead us to infer that the name "Christian" itself was not a selection made by the early disciples of Christ themselves,** but rather was bestowed upon them by outsiders – possibly a derisive appellation, as the word became very odious in the camp of unbelieving Jews and pagan idolaters very soon after Pentecost.

In any event, it is recorded in Acts 11:26, during Paul's ministrations, that *the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*. The name adhered to the body as a distinctive sect, and the tenets of their faith were widely known, if not generally accepted for belief. This is evidenced by the record of Paul's masterly defense of his principles in his argument before King Agrippa in Acts 26:26-27, the representative of a nation entirely outside of the Jewish commonwealth. Mark the language of the great Apostle: *For the king knoweth of these things, before whom I also speak freely, for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.* (That is, theoretically.)

We then have the king's answer, where the term of which we are speaking is on record the second time in Holy Writ: *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian* (vs. 28). We wish you would note in passing that while both Paul and Agrippa understood and accepted the word "Christian" as standing for some definite ideal, yet there could be no mistake in either of their minds as to what formed the basis of, or was represented by the term thus used. The context of Paul's argument furnishes the details, the pith of which was contained in his summary: *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets; I know that thou believest.* It is evident, then, that the Hebrew prophets can throw some light on the question, "What constitutes a Christian?" in the apostolic sense in which the term was understood in Paul's day.

The third place in which we find the word "Christian" is in 1 Peter 4:16. Peter uses the term here (which must have been commonly accepted by that time) in a special sense as showing that all true disciples of Christ must expect during their probation to pass through trials of suffering and

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endurance of like nature with their Master and Leader. Peter says, *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when*

his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf (vss. 12-13, 16).

To suffer as a Christian was, in Peter’s day, to suffer in like manner as Christ did. On the part of adherents, it called for certain qualities of character which we would probably find sadly lacking in the assemblies of men and women that flock in such large numbers to the churches of our day, that have named upon themselves the name Christian. The point we wish to make is this: that there is little or nothing in a name itself unless it be directly and indisputably given by the Spirit of God, in which case it looms large in importance. We are told that Jesus was given a name above all other creatures in heaven above or earth beneath – and the only name under heaven whereby men can be saved.

Outside of this feature, ordinary names and designations lose their original significance, because men, in the ever-changing form of language, attach different ideas to words that carried formerly a distinctive meaning. Keep this point in mind in order to understand what constitutes a Christian in the biblical sense.

Many millions of men and women in the world today claim the word “Christian” as their rightful designation, in utter ignorance of how the title can be scripturally acquired. They will tell you that they were born Christians. Such a statement is not cause to wonder; it is a commonly accepted dogma that the principal nations of Europe, America and certain isles of the seven seas are all Christian nations, while the whole of Asia and the most of Africa are made up of heathen nationalities. This form of expression is the way of the world, and not that of the Divine Mind. The Bible makes no such distinctions. In the light of Scripture testimony, we discover that previous to the time of Christ only two classes are recognized: Jews and Gentiles. After the coming of Christ and the institution of the general gospel call, still two classes are broadly recognized, namely, saints and sinners, the former being recruited from, or “called out” from the latter body, which embrace the sum total of mankind.

“In Christ”

“In Christ,” henceforth the Jew was to have no pre-eminence over the Gentile in the matter of reward pertaining to the Gospel. In the Divine plan both Jew and Gentile were put on exactly the same basis. The Apostle Paul tells us all were naturally under the “law of sin and death” and bound in chains under a common condemnation. While the Jew, under the law of Moses, had certain national rights guaranteed unto him temporarily (in which Gentiles had no part), yet when the Christian dispensation was inaugurated these special privileges automatically ceased. Thus by Divine arrangement whereby Gentiles as well as Jews would become one body, both would be related to the high purpose which God had in view for all who would qualify as true followers of Christ.

It will therefore be seen that the mere accident of natural birth confers no right upon anyone to call himself a Christian, either in the individual or national sense. The so-called “heathen” has just as much right to assume the title of “Christian” as the most enlightened sinner of any of the recognized “civilized” countries, our own included. To ascertain how to become a Christian scripturally is a most important matter, the most important, in fact, of any object in life.

Saints and Sinners

As we shall see, the prizes to be obtained for the effort put forth in attaining the status of a Christian are so many, so varied, and so valuable that everything else – as a final objective – **FADES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE BY COMPARISON.** **We have already noted that Christians in the early days were rarely addressed by that name. Their common designation was “saint” or “saints.”** Even in the use of this term the great Apostasy has created a wrong impression of the meaning of the word by their custom of canonizing and holding up for worship certain historical personages (many of them entire myths) and others who have long ago mingled their bones with the dust, but whose souls are supposed to live on forever. These characters have been made into veritable gods in the minds of a credulous people, and the name of “saint,” as applied to these objects of worship, has altered the true significance of the word – except to those instructed in the Divine application.

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The Apostle Paul not only tells us who the saints are, but connects them with a form of doctrine which they believed as followers of Christ, or true Christians. We learn this from his epistles; for our purpose we will cite Romans 1:1-7, *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,*

*separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, **called to be saints**, grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

By this reading you will note that the word “saint” was not applied (as the Catholic Church prescribes) to individual personalities of supposed importance, but to a body or community of ordinary human beings, who had espoused a special faith, among whom Paul places himself after stating his credential as an apostle, *For obedience to the faith among all nations for his name* (Romans 1:5).

For this reason, they were “called to be saints,” or a separated body, holding in future different views on religion to those they had formerly held. These had aspirations for a life beyond this present one, which could only be entered through a resurrection from the dead in like manner as Paul declared had occurred to Jesus Christ, by whose gospel the saints were called and to which tenets they were separated. The status of a saint or Christian is bestowed on the individual by the favor of God in calling him or her from darkness unto light: from the prospect of certain death as the wages of sin, to life eternal through a resurrection from the dead. This is why natural birth can at no time be said to confer the right to any to call themselves Christians. God calls them specially to a second birth for that honor. This explains the reason why Christ answered Nicodemus in the manner recorded, replying, ***Ye must be born again.*** This form of new birth involves both a mental and physical process before the subject attains the end in view, and can be broadly stated as comprehended in the gospel teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

The Primacy of Belief

Two main principles are involved as affecting the “saints” or “called ones” before they can become related to and affected by the provisions of the call. The first is that they subscribe fully and intelligently to the articles of belief propounded in the Gospel, and second, that they adjure all former evil modes of living and aspire to the code of ethics / principles of the life of the founder, the Lord Jesus. Both provisions are necessary of fulfillment, but in the matter of order the first is the more important; nay, absolutely essential.

We lay particular stress on this factor because it is customary among those in authority in the churches, which call themselves Christian, to promulgate the doctrine that salvation is offered on the principle of award for good

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our hopes rest, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* John the Baptist tells us that he came as witness of the light, that all men through Jesus might believe. And we are told further in John 1:11-13, that Jesus *came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God* (you see, natural birth does not count).

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:21, ...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. It will be seen from these Scripture citations that salvation is predicated, not on righteous acts, but on certain principles of belief. That God requires this of us should in itself be sufficient, but like everything else in the Deity's methods, there is discernable a vital principle at stake. This, when examined, not only shows God's eternal wisdom, but likewise manifests the depth of the love which was the foundation of His resolve in bringing man's redemption within the realm of possibility. If God had predicated man's salvation on the principle of his obedience to and complete fulfillment of the law of righteousness, the conditions would have proved impossible of performance on man's part, and the plan doomed to failure on account of man's natural tendency to sin. Therefore, the mercy of God is disclosed in that He has made belief in the efficacy of His Son's righteousness, and belief in the things involved in his sacrifice, the means of which we can be redeemed from the state of alienation existing between God and man. **An appreciation of this simple fact will clearly show why it is so necessary to know what we should believe, the details of which fully answer the question, "What constitutes a Christian or saint?"**

It would be impossible in the limits of one address to give all the details involved in such a summary; we can but epitomize the outstanding features. To begin with, all true Christians or saints have come to a correct knowledge of their physical and moral nature. They realize that they are truly mortal or perishable, and are under condemnation of death from the day of their natural birth. They also appreciate and believe that they are sinners and alienated from God and His righteousness in consequence thereof. These twin disabilities under which man labors form the basis of his separation from things Divine. They also make necessary the exercise of a Supreme Power, outside of human jurisdiction, to remove the condemnation that consigns all alike to oblivion after a brief existence under the law of sin and death. It was this dread of dissolution of which Paul writes to the

deeds, or on account of leading a righteous life; irrespective of any fixed belief as a fundamental. This is a deplorable misconception, and contrary to God's appointed way. The Great Teacher has reiterated the cardinal doctrine on which all

Hebrews concerning Jesus and the purpose of his manifestation. He says in Hebrews 2:15, *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Paul had previously proclaimed this cardinal fact of the death sentence as man's natural inheritance being made the basis for God's plan of redemption, and he points out to his converts in Rome that it becomes a cause for jubilation on their part to know that this is so, and that His provision in sending Christ to save sinners will become efficacious if His message is fully believed. Paul says in Romans 5:8-12, *But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* The apostle's deductions here enumerated are both logical and sound, and are borne out in their entirety by our every-day knowledge of the ravages of death.

No true saint or Christian can believe any other dogma than that which is set forth in the pages of Holy Writ, and therefore it will be seen how impossible it must be for those holding to the belief of "immortal soulism" to acquire the salvation that is offered by Deity. They do not believe that they are in the physical, mortal condition in which the word of God declares them to be. They are looking for another kind of salvation, which cannot fit their case, and is therefore futile.

It will be seen that man's natural condition, on account of sin, is both a deplorable and helpless one, and that he is dependent upon the mercy, love and power of God entirely for betterment. There is ample scope in man's case for the display of the wisdom of the Creator, and the exercise of those Divine qualities of character, which the Bible informs us are the natural attributes of Deity. God is spirit. Man is flesh. God is wisdom. Natural man is foolishness. God is love. Natural man is hateful. God is all powerful. Man is weakness personified. God is immortal. Man is mortal. And so we could go on.

The Salvation God Offers

We find, therefore, the salvation which God offers His creatures to be of a nature and conception in accordance with His revealed character. His offer, predicated on belief in His message, is that those who obey the call and observe conditions, shall receive at His hands, if faithful, a perpetual lease on life, instead of the fleeting existence which is our experience now and which we see ends miserably in the grave. Our proof for this lies in the declaration of Scripture given through the divinely appointed spokesman, who said: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that*

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whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Also, *The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life* (Romans 6:23). The accomplishment of the Divine Purpose is effected

through the new birth and new creation – by the process of a resurrection from among the dead of those amenable to that state. Universal resurrection is not taught in the Scriptures any more than “immortal soulism,” and those who trust in it and in a second chance for repentance after this life will remain in the congregation of the dead with all who have not believed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Adam all die. That covers all humanity. In Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22). To get into Christ, we must believe his gospel message. We not only must believe his gospel, but our obedience also involves immersion in his sin-covering name through the waters of baptism. A faithful walk thereafter insures not only a resurrection when Christ comes, but a change of physical condition, and the bestowal of life everlasting.

Christ said, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16). God has not left us without evidence of the possibilities to be obtained through His chosen channel of operation, in demonstrating that the *modus operandi* of the resurrection of dead bodies is not only feasible, but is His clearly defined objective in effecting man’s salvation. We can repeat again Paul’s question to Agrippa, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?* The great majority are incredible of this truth, owing to the fact that their ideas of salvation preclude the necessity of a resurrection. They either deny it outright or accord it a very secondary consideration, in contrast with the thought given to the salvation of their supposed “immortal souls.” They do not believe, as Paul tells us in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, that if the dead raise not, then all in their graves have perished.

His Plan and Guarantee

God’s endorsement of His plan and His guarantee of its efficacy for the purpose in view, is given us in the concrete illustration of His Son’s death, his resurrection to life again, the change of his physical constitution, and the bestowal of life eternal. We are speaking here of the complete process of resurrection in its different phases, as it will affect all those who are finally saved. Many shall be raised to life again temporarily who will be pronounced unfaithful at the judgment, and who will die the “second death.” But those of the other class are to be changed and endowed with endless life. When Christ was on earth he raised several from the death state, but this only shadowed forth the latent power of God within him, and

gave proof of his intention to do greater things later on. Those who were raised all died again, so that in the full and complete sense of the term, Christ has become the “first fruits” of them that are asleep: *The firstborn from the dead*, as Colossians 1:18 describes him. He did not raise himself, as some

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erroneously believe, but as Paul states: *God the Father, raised him* (Galatians 1:1). Acts 26:23 declares that Christ should suffer, and that He should be *the first that should rise from the dead*. That is, first, in the absolute resurrectional sense, both as to priority and purpose in the Divine plan. How beautifully all Scripture harmonizes and intelligently portrays the Divine mode of procedure, when we grasp the first principles of the lines along which God works. **We have Christ the Redeemer, a perfect example in himself passing through all the gradations from sin-cursed mortality up to the heights of immortal blessedness. His saints or followers are instructed that this same course of experience shall be theirs before reaching their ultimate goal.** In view of this, how illuminating is the Scripture from 1 Corinthians 15:23, *But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*. To us, the extreme importance of Christ's resurrection is to be found in the basic declaration of Scripture that, *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). And as declared in Romans 4:25, *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification*. Therefore, if there is no resurrection, there is no justification from our sins, and no life eternal in consequence.

Our comfort for belief lies in the record in Acts 13:30-34: *But God raised him from the dead, and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.*

It has pleased God, who thus raised up our Lord and Master, to confer upon him the hitherto Divine right of dispensing life eternal unto all who should believe and qualify as true Christians. We will quote briefly a few proofs: John 5:26-27: *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also*; 1 John 5:11, *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life (that is by promise), and this life is in his Son.*

When this power will be used is clearly taught in many Scripture statements. We will cite one in particular as covering all the points under consideration. This statement was given by Jesus to those whom he had told that his was the work of God, and that they should believe on him whom God hath sent, *They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee, What dost thou work?* (John 6:30) Jesus ends his reply by saying, *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day* (John 6:39-40).

When Fact Replaces Faith

In John 6:39-40, we are introduced to a specific time (yet future), when the salvation of the saints becomes a reality: when it becomes a matter of FACT, instead of a matter of FAITH as now. This disposes of (as illusory) all popular ideas of “sudden death / sudden glory,” and is in unison with the Scriptures which say:

2 Timothy 4:1 – *Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*

Matthew 16:27 – *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Acts 17:31 – *Because he (that is God), hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

As an element of Christian faith it becomes imperative that all saints understand and believe in the second coming of Jesus to earth again. It should not be hard to give credence to this, if we are ready to accept scriptural instruction in place of popular delusions. It is only the class so instructed, who believe the doctrine, that can partake of the benefits that will accrue at his appearance, and so with all the various matters that go to make up the sum total of the Gospel message. They must all become the subject of faith and belief. It is written in Hebrews 9:28, *Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* And Isaiah 25:9 says, *It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for*

A clear understanding of this hope creates a desire within each individual saint for the bringing forth of fruits *meet for repentance*. This is just as essential in its place, for the completion of our salvation, as the matter of belief. It is only secondary as a matter of sequence.

him, and he will save us: This is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Thus far, we have only pointed out some of the advantages that mortal man will gain as a reward for his belief. **Our presentation of the subject would be lacking if we did not include as the principal article of faith, belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God** (Acts 8:12), **which is to be set up on the earth. This is both the foundation and keystone of the Gospel message.** In this present address, we cannot go further into details, other than to say that it is through the establishment of this glorious Kingdom on Earth that God proposes to bless His saints by giving them an eternal inheritance therein, and further to eventually bless all the nations of the wide world.

Paul says to the Thessalonians, *God hath called you unto his kingdom and glory* (1 Thessalonians 2:12). The Apostle James tells his contemporaries (and us who have believed), *Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?* (2:5) The fervent belief in these precious promises engenders in the hearts and minds of those exercised thereby the true Christian hope, which if persevered in surely brings a great reward. Peter admonishes us: *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:13).

A clear understanding of this hope creates a desire within each individual saint for the bringing forth of fruits *meet for repentance*. This is just as essential in its place for the completion of our salvation as the matter of belief. It is only secondary as a matter of sequence. No man or woman can be good enough (measured by the Divine standard) to win salvation or eternal life by moral excellence alone. It is predicated on our belief of the Gospel (the good works following) in imitation of the perfect pattern, Jesus Christ. On the other hand, we may theoretically assent to a belief in all the things of the Gospel message, and yet fail of winning the prize through not bringing forth the “fruits of the Spirit.” This is why John exhorts his brethren saying: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure* (1 John 3:2-3).

In conclusion, we would impress upon you that the calling to be a saint or Christian is, as Paul expresses it: *Our high calling in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). We are not naturally born to it. In the scriptures, sin, suffering, and mortality, with all its attendant ills, are related to a body of death, which perishes forever. It is God’s decree that this condition should, in course of time, cease. Those who put their trust in the theory of man possessing an immortal soul would charge God with folly in His act of creation in bringing into being creatures whose very nature would perpetuate

throughout all eternity a class of rebels in open rebellion to Him, and at variance with His righteous laws. The whole supposition is an absurdity and an affront to Deity, who has declared that *the wages of sin is death*. On the other hand, we have the Divine assurance that *the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 6:23), which is only bestowed on a spiritual class, and is associated with those only who qualify for the exalted position. It is declared to be possible of attainment by all those who believe and obey the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **We earnestly exhort you to seek this pathway of hope, which is the God-appointed way unto that life eternal which will be duly manifested in the Kingdom of God.**



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