

The New Birth **by Oliver B Greene**

" For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." I Peter 3:18

"Except a Man Be Born Again"

Did our Lord Jesus Christ come into the world to make men moral, or did He come into the world to do more than make us moral ? In this message we shall answer that question according to the Word of God.

Peter speaks to us in these inspired words: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3 :18) .

Inspired of God, Paul penned down these words: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15 :1-4).

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21).

"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10: 5) .

". . . Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9 :22). In John 3:36 we read, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Again I ask, Did our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ come into the world, suffer as He suffered, endure the torture and shame of the cross, just to make men moral? Or did He come to do more than that?

According to modern preaching, liberal theology, and today's anemic religion, the average person thinks that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to do good, to live a good life, to set a good example, to heal the sick, to comfort the sorrowing, to set up a standard of righteousness and live a life of thoughtful reverence and sincere devotion to the unseen God. But let me remind you that Jesus Christ was God Almighty in flesh ! He did not come into the world to set standards or to be an example. He came to bring salvation to

hell-deserving sinners!

Today, liberal, modernistic preachers are proclaiming that people should go about as Christ did, doing good, visiting the sick, taking care of the poor and the needy, being kind, gentle of manner, spreading sunshine in a dark world. These things are all commendable, to be sure, but beloved, such religion is not taught in the Word of God. Jesus Christ came into this world to do more than make men moral or spread sunshine in the darkness of man's day.

There are thousands of people on earth today who do not belong to any church, nor do they profess to be religious but they are kind, benevolent, helpful, more or less cultured and refined, educated, living clean moral lives. These dear souls are respected and honored by their fellow man. Many of them are more generous than some church members are they contribute large sums of money to good organizations. If we measure Christianity by these things then some folk who make no pretense of Christianity go much further than some who DO profess to be Christians.

But Christianity is NOT just clean living, liberal giving, good morals, or kindness toward our fellow man. It is much, much more than these. Salvation amounts to a great deal more than living a good life and doing good to others.

I am sure you want the Word of God on this subject, so we will use the Bible as our only textbook in this study of the new birth the study of immortality, not morality; redemption, not clean living. We will look into the perfect law of liberty "that is able to make us wise unto salvation."

The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, a light to our pathway. The Word of God is not bound . . . the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). To his converts James declares, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). Peter cries out, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:23). In Ephesians 2:8, 9 we read, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." And Romans 10:17 tells us, ". . . Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

My dear friend, the only way any person can be saved is through the power of the Word of God. The only way any person can become clean yea, clean and fit to enter the Pearly White City is through the Word. In John 15 :3 Jesus makes this statement: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

In II Timothy 1:9, 10 we read, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

"Who hath saved us . . ." This refers to God. God saves us, and He saves us for only one reason, as clearly set forth in Ephesians 4:32: ". . . Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you !"

In this marvelous verse of Scripture the Holy Spirit clearly says that God saves us FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. God did not save me because I was worthy of salvation, nor because I was fit to be saved--I was not worth saving! But Jesus purchased my redemption with His own precious blood, and because He died on the cross for sinners, God forgives for Christ's sake and ONLY for Christ's sake. Apart from the shed blood of the Lord Jesus we cannot be saved, we cannot please God nor become His child.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an hol~ calling, not according to our works . . ." According to God's Word we are not saved according to our works, we are not saved BY works "not of works, lest any man should boast." All of the good works that we might do in a lifetime would not and could not atone for the least of our sins !

". . . But according to His own purpose and grace, whqch was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began . . ." We are not saved by works, but by the marvelous grace of God grace that was provided before God laid the foundation of the world.

. . . But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ . . .
." This marvelous grace, this glorious salvation, though not revealed in the Old Testament era, is revealed yea, has been brought down to man by none other than the only begotten of the Father, very God in flesh ! Jesus was salvation brought down to man.

And not only did Christ manifest salvation and light, but He "abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The devil hates the Word of God; he despises the pure Gospel because it is through the Word and by the power of the Gospel that men are saved. It is utterly and absolutely impossible for any person to be saved until he hears the Word of God, believes the Word of God, and receives the Christ who WAS the Word in flesh.

In I Corinthians 15 :1-4 Paul gives a clear outline of the Gospel the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus "according to the Scriptures." Paul did not preach salvation according to Judaism, Romanism, or any denominational

belief. He preached the death, the burial, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and he preached according to the Scriptures.

It makes no difference what you think about the Word of God, nor what I think about it. It makes no difference what any minister says about it. The Word of God is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119 :89) and cannot be broken. The Word of God will face us when we stand to receive our just and due reward!

God saves us fo~ Christ's sake- not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace. He saves us through the finished work of Christ on Calvary the work that was blueprinted by the Godhead before the foundation of this world.

Redemption was planned, provided, and perfected before this earth was created by Almighty God: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:18-25).

In these verses we note that Peter and Paul agree one hundred percent concerning redemption. Peter declares, ". . . Ye know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things." Man has corrupted everything he has touched. All that is necessary for ruin to develop in a child, a family, a community, or a nation is simply for that child, that family, community, or nation to completely ignore God and His Word, make their own laws and run their own lives independent of God. In a few short years corruption will develop. Without God, man is helpless, hopeless, and hell bound. Man can no more cleanse himself from sin and from his sinful nature than the leopard can change his spots.

I praise God for the comforting words of Peter. We are not redeemed with corruptible things! We have a redemption that is incorruptible and that will never fade away, because our redemption is IN God, BY God, and THROUGH God. Salvation does not come through anything that man's hands have provided or that man's wisdom has blueprinted.

We are redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish

and without spot." Jesus was the Lamb of God, and in Him there was no sin. He was the spotless One - pure, undefiled, untouched by sin. He who knew no sin was made sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus took upon Himself a body of flesh, a body like unto sinful man; and in that body He conquered every temptation hell hurled at Him. He overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil. He carried our sins to the cross and nailed them there!
Hallelujah ! We can shout the victory if we are covered by the precious blood of the Lamb !

Before God ever laid the foundation of the world, before He created this universe, the Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit held a conference and agreed that the Lamb would come into the world at the appointed time and pay the sin-debt. (Yes, I am a Trinitarian I believe in one God manifest in three Persons. I could not believe the Bible and not believe in the Triune God.) All of this was planned and perfected before God created man, yea, in the eternity behind us before the foundation of the world!

This tremendous truth of salvation has been made manifest to us in these last days. We have been living in the last days ever since Jesus came to this earth to pay the sin-debt. These ARE the last days. In this day of grace, God is making His last loving, compassionate attempt to get men to serve HIM, live for Him, and honor Him as the only true God. These are the closing days of God's dealing with mankind. When the Church (the body of Christ) is completed, we will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air and this marvelous day of grace will come to a close.

God will then deal with earth's masses in terrible judgment. There will be souls saved during that time, but they will be saved by "enduring to the end" that is, if they refuse to receive the mark of the beast, and instead of receiving his mark they surrender their lives to martyrdom, they will be saved by enduring to the end. And although a great multitude will be saved, they will not enjoy the marvelous salvation by grace as we enjoy it today.

The Bible clearly declares that when the Church is raptured, the Holy Spirit will be called out with the Church. Then it is that the 144,000 sealed ones, of the twelve tribes of Israel, will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. These 144,000 missionaries will declare the coming of the King, and those who accept the message and refuse the mark of the beast will enter the kingdom. Those who reject the message and follow the beast will be eternally damned. They cannot be forgiven after receiving the mark of the beast.

We are living in the most glorious days this world (and mankind) has ever known. Never has there been an age like this glorious age of grace salvation by grace, through faith, the gift of God. Before God created man, salvation was planned and perfected; and in the fulness of time, Jesus brought salvation down to man. He paid sin's debt with His own precious blood, and today He extends His

nail-scarred hand to all who will come unto God by Him.

"Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." Peter is preaching salvation by believing in God who raised up Jesus. Paul declared, ". . . If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10).

In our present verse, Peter preaches salvation by faith, in order that our faith and our hope might be in God--not in our works, our religion, or anything else that man can provide. We are not saved by joining a church, we are not saved by baptism, we are not saved by good works. We are saved when we exercise faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ." Beloved, what IS truth? In John 14:6 Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." In John 8 :32 he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus is truth, the Word is truth, and the Word and Jesus are inseparable because the Word of God is Christ, and Christ is the Word:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14 in part). Notice that the Word tells us we purify our souls in obeying the truth not in joining the church, not by being baptized in water, nor by daily living the best we know how. The Scripture does not tell us that we purify our souls by attending church, giving our money, or saying prayers. We purify our souls in obeying the truth and the truth is the living Word of God ! I repeat for emphasis, it is absolutely impossible for one to be born again apart from the Word of God.

I do not believe there is a verse in all of the Word of God that is any clearer or more easily understood than I Peter 1:23. We are born again--not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible--and the incorruptible seed is the Word of God, "which liveth and abideth for ever." Peter here is preaching the "must" of the new birth, the "how" of the new birth, the result of the new birth--and as Jesus taught Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I have repeatedly made the statement that apart from the Word of God it is impossible for one to be saved. The book of Acts gives us some very enlightening Scriptures along that line:

Just after Pentecost, five thousand were saved through the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 4 :4) .

The pure Gospel preached by Philip brought great revival in Samaria (Acts 8 :5-8) .

God called Philip to leave the revival in Samaria and journey south. On his journey he encountered the Ethiopian eunuch, and through expounding unto him the Word of God, he led the eunuch into salvation (Acts 8 :26-39) .

The jailer at Philippi cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house" (Acts 16 :25-34) .

When Paul preached the Word of God in Ephesus, the Word proved to be the expeller of evil, and a mighty revival broke out (Acts 19 :11-20) .

In Acts 20:32 Paul says, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP, AND TO GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED."

The Word of God is the answer for every need of every heart. The Word is alive, quick, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It wounds to heal, and kills to make alive. The sure word of promise is a light to gladden our hearts and guide our footsteps. It harmonizes with all of man's needs, whether great or small.

In verses 24 and 25 of our passage from Peter, he tells us that all flesh is as grass, the glory of man is like the flower of the grass, which soon withers and the flowers fall away. And then by contrast he assures us that "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which BY THE GOSPEL is preached unto you." Peter preached nothing but the Word the pure Gospel because, like John, he had seen, touched, and bore witness to the Living Word (I John 1: 1-3). He knew the risen, living Saviour . . . Peter preached the blood, he preached the new birth through faith in the finished work of Christ our Lord. Redemption comes through the blood, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. The new birth comes through the power of the Gospel, and apart from the Gospel there IS no new birth.

Writing to Titus, his son in the ministry, Paul says, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tie. 3 :3-7) .

Paul clearly teaches that all unbelievers are disobedient to God, deceived, serving all kinds of lusts and worldly pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating each other. You will note that he says, " WE ourselves," thus putting himself in the same category. (He is, of course, referring to the time before his conversion.)

He paints a hideous word-picture of the unbeliever and then "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared . . ." Beloved, God loved us while we were yet unlovely! We were not fit to be loved, we were not worthy of His love; but He loved us even before He made the world. He loved us so much that He agreed to the death of Jesus on the cross, that we, through faith in His finished work, might escape eternity in hell and make no mistake, my friend, there IS a hell ! The hottest sermon ever delivered on the subject of hell wa~ preached by none other than the tender Lamb of God, who died on the cross to save us FROM hell. Read Mark 9 :42-48.

In Titus 3 :5 Paul gives a beautiful outline of salvation --clear and concise; and you will note that he does not say one word about moral living. He does say, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." All of the good works we could do and all of the right living we could live would only add up to "filthy rags" in the sight of God (Isa. 64 :6).

"But according to HIS MERCY He saved us . . ." Note, first of all, His mercy. Beloved, never rush into God's presence and demand justice. If I had justice I would be in hell today! I live, I enjoy the abundance of God's blessings and the favor of His grace not because I deserve it, but because He has been exceedingly merciful to me and I know He has been merciful to YOU. I am what I am by the grace of God. I am saved today because of His shed blood. God saved me for Jesus' sake the night I put my trust in the finish work of Jesus Christ.

. . . By the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Paul did not say, "by the washing of the baptistry," nor did he say "by the merit of good, clean, moral living." He said, "By the washing of regeneration" and regeneration comes through the Word of God. We are clean through the Word. The Holy Spirit convicts us, draws us, and baptizes us into the body of Christ when we are born of the Spirit and washed in the blood.

In the book of Genesis, the blood began to flow. Adam and Eve deliberately disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Then they immediately set about to prepare a covering for the shame of their nakedness--they sewed fig leaves together and made aprons for themselves.

Everything was fine until "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."

God called out, "Adam . . . where art thou ?" Adam cried out in fear from his hiding place among the trees; and when God asked him what he had done, he of course laid all the blame on Eve, and Eve in turn blamed the serpent. But God did not accept their excuses nor did He accept their coverings.

God slew innocent animals, and at the price of the blood of those animals He made coats for Adam and Eve. Thus we have the first blood covering, and since that day when God covered Adam and Eve at the price of the shed blood of the innocent animals, there has been no covering apart from the blood of the innocent sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Rivers of blood flowed from Genesis to Malachi. Tens of thousands of animals, doves, and pigeons were slain and their blood was offered on the altar. But in Hebrews 10 :1-6 Paul declares:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers there unto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered ? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure."

Beloved, every innocent animal slain in the Old Testament era pointed to the blood of the Lamb of God, foreordained before the foundation of the world. His blood, shed on Calvary, made good the offerings of those in the Old Testament who, in faith, offered blood on the altar. Had not Jesus died on the cross, the blood shed throughout the Old Testament era would have been shed in vain, and those who offered it would have died without hope and their spirits would be tormented in the pits of the damned!

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from ALL sin. The Old Testament Christian looked forward to Calvary, the New Testament Christian looks back to Calvary, where Jesus, on the cross, settled the sin-debt for ALL, forever. He offered His blood once, to be offered no more. Therefore there remains no sacrifice for sin. We must either put our faith in the shed blood of Jesus, or suffer the eternal torment of a devil's hell. Apart from the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no covering, no remission, no forgiveness for sin.

". . . A body thou hast prepared me." What the law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh, God accomplished when He gave His only begotten Son in a body like unto sinful flesh, and in that body He condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:1-4).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2 :9) .

This verse gives a very clear statement concerning Jesus--how and why He came into the world. Notice that He was made "a little lower" than the angels. He did not take a body like unto the angels, but like unto sinful man, in order that He might suffer, and die. He DID suffer death, and He is now crowned with glory and honor.

Jesus came into the world "that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Had it not been for God's grace, He would never have allowed Jesus to suffer the terrible death of the cross. Christ did not come into the world to make men moral, or to make men good, nor to clean up lives and cities. He came into this world, took a body like unto the body of sinful flesh, that He might suffer and die, that He might taste the bitter dregs of death, for every man.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). Beloved, do you see the sinless Son of God as He suffers He who knew no sin, but was made to be sin for us? Can you imagine the agony of His Suffering ? Is it possible for the finite mind to even think of His suffering? Consider that the sinner's place is in hell; and since Jesus took the sinner's place He suffered all the agony, all the woe, all the torment and sorrow of an everlasting hell the Just suffering for the unjust, that he might bring us to God !

He did not suffer that He might make us moral, or that He might make us good, or that He might make us religious. He suffered that He might bring us to God and it took all the pain and agony He endured to keep you and me out of hell ! By like token, those who refuse to receive Him, those who refuse to trust in His finished work, will suffer in hell all that HE suffered to keep them OUT of hell !

I want us to hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the Word of God gives it to us in the Gospels. First, let us hear Matthew:

"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And He took with Him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: Tarry ye

here, and watch with me" (Matt. 26:36-68).

The Garden of Gethsemane was a place where Jesus often went to pray. Matthew tells us that on this occasion the Saviour cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death !" In other words, He said, "My soul is about to die!" Jesus was literally pouring out His soul for sin. Beloved, get this: JESUS TOOK THE SINNER'S PLACE and the sinner's place is in an eternal hell. That is what God declares in His word: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die . . ." (Ezek. 18:20). "The wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23). ". . . Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1 :15) . Sin and death are synonymous.

Is it possible for us to imagine the agony of that hour when Jesus cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" ? And yet, that hour was imperative, as we will see a bit later in our study. It was absolutely necessary that Jesus suffer the agony He described in that prayer!

Now let us hear Mark's testimony as the Holy Spirit speaks through Him: "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch" (Mark 14 :32-34).

What do we find in Mark's account that Matthew did not tell us? Mark declares that Jesus "began to be sore AMAZED." Scholars tell us that the Greek word used here is the same as that used in Mark 16:5 where the Spirit describes the women as being affrighted (or terrified).

According to God's Word, Jesus was present when God the Father threw Satan out of heaven and cast down the disobedient angels with him. He witnessed the flood in Noah's day, when every living creature (save Noah and his family) was destroyed. He witnessed the ground opening and swallowing up "all the men that appertained unto Korah . . . they went down alive into the pit" (Num. 16 :32, 33). He sat in heaven's glory and saw the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Beloved, I ask you, in the name of all that is high and holy, if Jesus saw all of these sights of torture and torment without amazement or fright, then what did He see in the Garden of Gethsemane that sorely amazed and terrified Him? Surely there are not enough words in all the languages of all the world to describe the agony through which He passed in that hour!

Personally, I believe He saw the devil and all hell marshalled against Him to stop Him. Satan knew that the shed blood of Christ on the cross meant sure defeat for him; and if you will make a careful study of the Old Testament you will discover that from Genesis to Malachi a river of blood flowed as the devil

attempted to stop the seed of the woman whom God Almighty informed him would bruise his head. I believe that Jesus saw all the emissaries of hell, the powers of spiritual wickedness, marshalled in all their strength against Him. He saw the cup that contained all the bitter dregs of sin and He saw these things in the flesh as He had never seen them before. The scene was so much more horrible, so much more terrifying, when He saw it through the eyes of the flesh, that the sight amazed and terrified Him. Beloved, the sinless Son of God suffered all this~nd more that ?Jou and I might be saved!

Now let us hear the testimony of Luke concerning the suffering of our Lord: 'And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Luke 22:39-46).

What does Luke point out that Matthew and Mark did not tell us? He tells us that in this terrible agony, Jesus prayed so earnestly that His sweat he came "as it were great drops of blood!" I am sure that all who read these lines know that Luke was a physician and who would detect bloody perspiration more quickly than a doctor; Luke points out that as Jesus knelt and prayed, His suffering was so terrible that the arteries in His body, the veins in His face yea, the smallest vessels in His hands, were so energized in agony that they began to shed forth His atoning blood!

But beloved, Jesus did not come into this world to spill His blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was imperative that His blood be shed on the cross. Satan's struggle against the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was so great that he attempted to shed His precious blood before He reached Calvary as He lay prostrate on the ground in the agony of prayer! But God sent an angel from heaven to lift up and strengthen the Saviour.

We have considered the testimony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Now let us listen to John the Beloved as he records the words of Jesus:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this

world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said, signifying what death He should die" (John 12 :27-33) .

Nowhere does John refer to the Lord's perspiration being stained with blood, nor to the fact that Jesus was sorely amazed, nor that He was exceeding heavy and sorrowful. But he gives us the words of Jesus as He faces the hour when He will taste death for every man.

Jesus cried out, "What shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?" Then He answers, "No, I dare not say, Father, save me from this hour, because I came into the world for this very hour, this hour when I shall taste death for every man, this hour when I shall battle and conquer all hell for allwhowill accept my finished work!"

Now beloved, is it to be supposed that Jesus left the glories of heaven, stepped from the bosom of the Father to the manger in a stable, gave up the riches of glory for the poverty of His earthly ministry, just for the sake of setting an example? Did He suffer all of the agony of Gethsemane, plus the humiliation of His trial, the scourging, the plucking out of his beard by the roots, the piercing of His brow with the crown of thorns, the buffeting and the mocking of the crowds, just to make men moral? In the words of Isaiah, was He wounded, bruised, chastened, smitten, and crucified on a Roman cross just to make sober men out of drunkards, ladies out of harlots, and honest men out of thieves? Did He suffer the shame of the cross that we might become respectable citizens and clean-living people?

The Word of God gives the answer. Christ did NOT endure all of the agony, sorrow, heartbreak and humiliation that was heaped upon Him simply that we might become moral beings and make this world a better place to live in. Until the very moment when He said, "It is finished !" and passed His spirit back to God, all that He did, all that He said, all that He suffered was in order that you and I might be born again and have within our bosom the Spirit of the living God!

Through the miracle of the new birth we poor, finite creatures have the divine nature of the eternal God and that miracle is made possible ONLY as we believe in the shed blood, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, according to the Scriptures.

We do not hear much about the suffering of Jesus in this age of anemic, "sissy" religion. Too many sermons today are bloodless, void of the message of suffering. Today we hear a gospel that detours around the cross, a gospel that is without suffering, without blood, and without repentance.

It is not surprising that some preachers preach only once a week--and only a

twenty-minute sermonette, at that! When a minister detours around the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the sufferings of Christ at Calvary, repentance for sin, and the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and confines his sermon to "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," it is understandable that it takes him six days of the week to prepare his sermonette for Sunday morning! It would take me many long hours, I am sure, to prepare a sermon from a social Gospel--but beloved, by the grace of God and as much as in me is, I will preach the Gospel of the cross the "bloody" Gospel, if you please until the Lord Jesus calls me home!

My Bible tells me that without the shedding of blood is no remission for sin. It tells me that we are redeemed --not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of the Lamb of God. It tells me that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. And as it was in the land of Egypt the night the death angel passed through, so it is today. God is still saying, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you !"

I am convinced that this side of heaven we will never know the power of the Word of God. Please turn to the eighteenth chapter of John's Gospel, and read the first eleven verses. You will note that a band of men and soldiers, led by Judas, came to the garden to arrest the Lord. They came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing all things, asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus then said unto them, "I AM HE" - and they "went backward, and fell to the ground!" What I want to point out here is the power of the Word. Jesus very calmly spoke three words "I am He" and the power of those words flattened His enemies to the ground.

But I can assure you that if you will receive the Word, it is the power of God unto salvation. If you reject the Word, you will be judged by the Word in the last day. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the WORD that I have spoken, ~he same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12 :48) . If you will receive the Word, it is the power of God unto the salvation of your soul; but if you hear and reject the Word, woe be unto you when the power of that Word falls upon you in judgment !

30 I am aware that the minister who dares preach the blood today is branded "a slaughterhouse preacher," but I must preach the whole truth of the Gospel, and I know that the blood i.~ what will determine a soul's eternal destiny. If you are covered by the blood, you will hear God say, "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." If you are NOT covered by the blood, you will hear Him say, "Take him away bind him and cast him into everlasting darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth !"

Before going further in the message, let me ask you- Are YOU saved? Do you KNOW that you are born again? Do you know that you are covered with the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine ! Oh,

what a foretaste of glory divine"? When a minister asks you, "Are you saved?" do you reply, "I am a church member . . . I have been baptized . . . I live the very best I know how"?

If that is the way you answer the all-important salvation question, then I beg you to get on your knees NOW and call on God. Ask Him to save you for Christ's sake. Put your faith in the shed blood of His cross. If you are hoping in church membership, good works, good living, or morality, you HAVE no hope you are lost! The Bible clearly declares, "Ye MUST be born again . . . Except ye repent, ye shall perish." If you are not born again, bow your head, receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will save you this very moment.