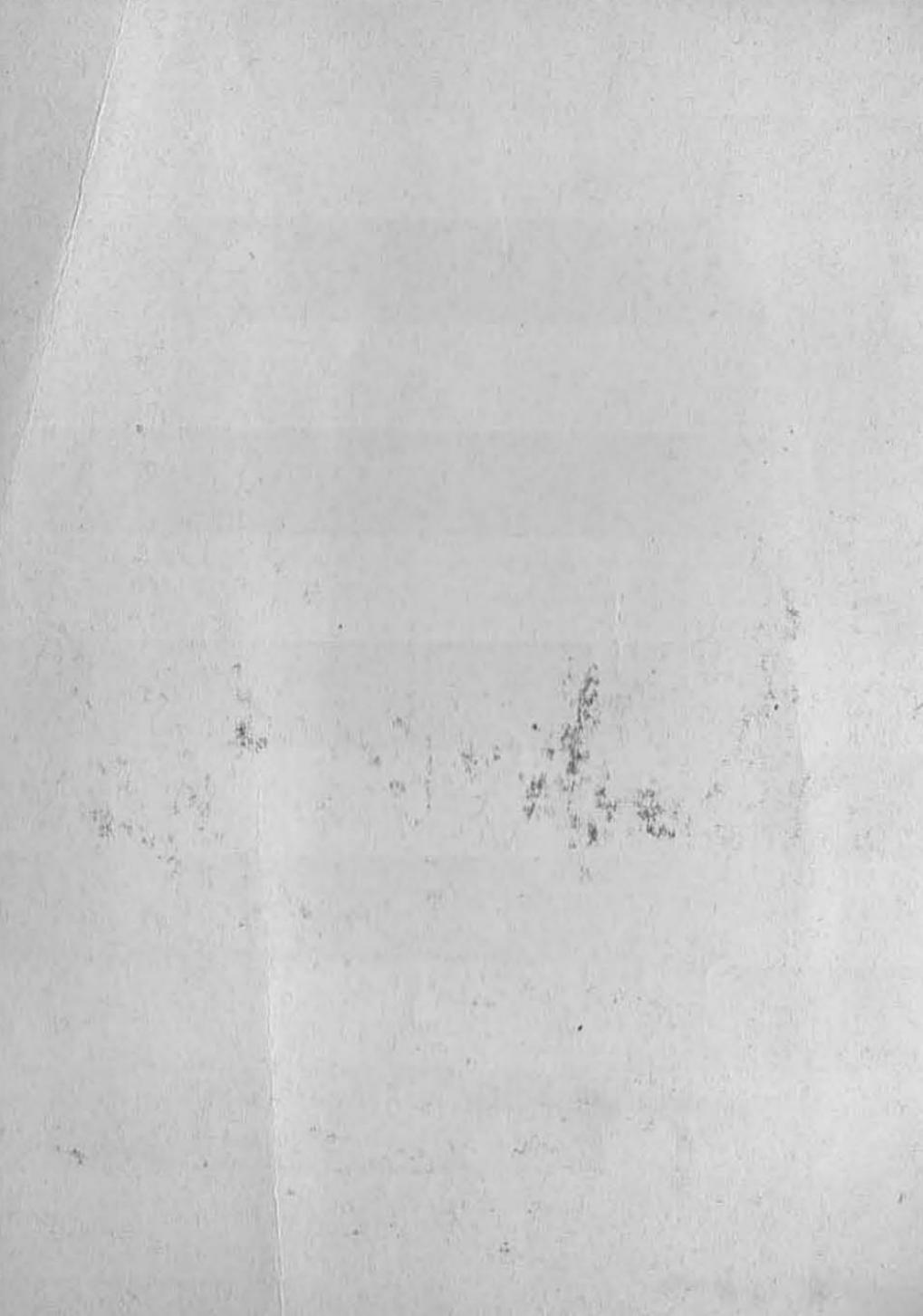


HEAVEN AND PURGATORY



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by J. F. Rutherford

Author of

The Harp of God, Deliverance, Creation, Reconciliation, Government, Life, Prophecy, Light. These are only a few of Judge Rutherford's numerous writings. Their combined circulation exceeds 93,500,000 copies.

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FOREWORD

Many people disbelieve in a heaven, and many more do not believe in a purgatory. Probably you have been amused, perhaps even disgusted, with the usual conceptions or descriptions of both places. The author of this book, however, does not draw upon his imagination. He sticks strictly to the sacred Scriptures and points out to you only what the Bible says about Heaven and Purgatory.

THE PUBLISHERS

Heaven and Purgatory

“**L**OOK at that headline in the morning paper. ‘Three Murderers Electrocuted; Spurn Aid of Clergy.’ Seems to me these criminals are becoming more hardened every day.” With these words Mr. Churchman greeted Mr. Christian as the latter entered his office.

Christian: Well, what about it?

Churchman: What about it! Why, such men, knowing that in a few minutes they shall die and be compelled to meet their Maker, refuse the last rites of the clergy! Would you think that they wanted to go to hell for ever? Why, this paper tells of three men that were electrocuted last night at the Sing Sing prison for killing the warden of another prison. One of them was a Catholic, another was a Protestant Episcopalian, and the third was a Jew. When the time came to lead these men to the death chamber the prison officials had kindly arranged for the clergymen to be there to administer to those condemned men the last rites. The first one to go to the chair was the Catholic, and when the priest stepped forward to administer the last service the condemned man not only refused him, but cursed the minister and went to death scorning the help of the clergyman. The next

one was led to the chair and he did the same thing and refused to let the Episcopal clergyman do anything for him. Then the Jew followed, and when the rabbi attempted to do something for him he refused. This paper says that all three of these men went to death scorning the aid of the clergymen. I cannot understand why men would do that. These three clergymen had their trip to the prison for nothing, when the men might have had some good done for them. What are we coming to, anyhow?

Christian: May I inquire, Mr. Churchman, what good the Catholic priest could have done for the man who was about to die, and what good the Protestant preacher or the Jewish rabbi might have done for the others that would have helped them? If the Catholic priest could have done some good for one, why could he not have done the same thing for all the others? Why should three clergymen be employed to be on hand at such a time? Are there different ways of saving men who are all condemned to die?

Churchman: Well now, that is rather a difficult question for me, but surely these clergymen could have helped save the souls of these men. Why do we have clergymen if they are not to help when death is impending? I was brought up a Catholic and I know that the Catholic church teaches that the very wicked go to eter-

nal torment, while the righteous go to everlasting rest in heaven, and that those who die in venial sin (that which is capable of being forgiven) go to a middle state of limited punishment; and that such place is called "purgatory". If one goes to that place, purgatory, his friends on earth may help him out if they employ the services of a priest of the church to intervene for him. I know that many prayers are made for those who thus die and go to purgatory. If this man, knowing that he was about to die, would refuse to let the priest administer the last rites to him, how could he expect any clergyman thereafter to pray for the repose of his soul in purgatory? Every Catholic knows that when a person is about to die, if he is a Catholic, the priest is called to administer the last rites of the church. I have always understood that such is a proper thing to do. Don't you think so?

Christian: What about the other fellow who was a Protestant? Did he have any chance to go to purgatory?

Churchman: Well, I don't think the Protestants believe in purgatory, but doubtless his minister could have helped him go to heaven.

Christian: And the Jew, what about him? Did he have a different kind of soul, or what could his rabbi do for him?

Churchman: You are asking me? I don't know about the Jews. I understand they do not believe in going to heaven when they die; but maybe they do. Don't you believe that all good persons go to heaven when they die, and that the bad ones go to torment, and that the others who are wicked go to purgatory and can later be transferred to heaven if some good priest says prayers for them? Why, I thought almost everybody believed that. Why, here I have a copy of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, which is a religious paper that I take regularly. It is published by the Extension Press, at the Brooks Building, Chicago. Let me read to you what it says about what a priest can do at death:

The pardon crucifix, the aid of which is to obtain pardon of God and to pardon one's neighbors, is of inestimable merit. Among its many benefits after being blessed by a priest, is that of a plenary indulgence at the moment of death.

If the priest were there at the time of death surely he could do as much as or more than the crucifix that had been blessed by the priest.

Christian: From whom does the priest get authority or power to bless a crucifix and impart "inestimable merit" to it? Or where does he get the authority to administer rites or benefits to another at death?

Churchman: Why, from his church, and that authority is given by the Bible.

Christian: Do you believe in God and in the Bible?

Churchman: Why, certainly I do.

Christian: Then you should take what the Bible says about this matter. I am sure you are quite sincere, Mr. Churchman, and want to believe only what is right. I also know that the Catholic church teaches that many go to purgatory at death and can thereafter be aided by the prayers of the living made in their behalf. If you should find that the Bible does not support that purgatorial theory would you still believe it?

Churchman: Why, of course I would have to believe what is in the Bible, because that is God's Word of truth. Surely the Bible teaches that men go to purgatory at death and can be aided by the prayers of others, and especially by the prayers of the priest. Surely the priests would not be teaching something that is not in the Bible.

Christian: A moment ago you stated to me that the Catholic church teaches that there are three places to which persons may go at death; that one is purgatory, another is heaven, and another eternal torment. Can you tell me where you learned that?

Churchman: Why certainly, I have a book right here in my desk, written by the late and venerable Cardinal Gibbons, one of the greatest

men in our church. It is called *The Faith of Our Fathers*. [Takes the book from his desk] On page 205 this statement is made: [Reads]

The Catholic Church teaches that, besides a place of eternal torments for the wicked and of everlasting rest for the righteous, there exists in the next life a middle state of temporary punishment, allotted for those who have died in venial sin, or who have not satisfied the justice of God for sins already forgiven. She also teaches us that, although the souls consigned to this intermediate state, commonly called purgatory, cannot help themselves, they may be aided by the suffrages of the faithful on earth. The existence of purgatory naturally implies the correlative dogma—the utility of praying for the dead—for the souls consigned to this middle state have not reached the term of their journey. They are still exiles from heaven and fit subjects for Divine clemency.

Christian: I concede that it is stated in the book, but is any Bible reference given to support that statement? Where in the Bible do you find anything upon which can be based the theory of purgatory? If it is true that some go to purgatory at death and there undergo punishment for an indefinite time, and can be relieved by others, is it not reasonable to expect that some reference to the Bible can be found to support it?

Churchman: Well, you know that it is the practice in the church to administer the last

rites or sacrifices just before death. Many a man makes a confession and repents when he is about to die, and the Protestant clergyman says that such go to heaven, while I believe they go to purgatory. Surely all these clergymen would not be teaching the people that those who make a confession on their deathbed go to heaven or purgatory unless the Bible teaches that. Now I remember a scripture text that the clergy use to support their work when they administer the last rites, and it shows that the dead go to purgatory. It is about two thieves who were crucified at the same time Jesus was crucified and one of them made a deathbed confession and Jesus told him that he would go to paradise that very day. If that is true, then the three men who were electrocuted last night, as this paper says, could have been benefited by the clergy if they had confessed and asked for forgiveness.

Christian: If a man can be a thief all the days of his life, or a murderer, and then a few minutes before his death make some confession before a priest or clergyman and be immediately sent to purgatory or to heaven, that would be a premium on crime, wouldn't it? If deathbed confessions provide an immediate passport into ease or glory, then that would be much inducement for many men to live dishonestly, understanding that they could escape at the last moment. I know that the clergymen teach this very

strange and unreasonable doctrine and millions of people have been induced to believe it. What about a man who tries all his life to do right? Does he fare any better? He deals honestly with his neighbors, helps the poor, and goes straight, as we say. He is illtreated and robbed by a thief, and when they both come to die the thief has only to confess to some clergyman a few minutes before death and then everything is all right with him. Honest men hear such teaching and it disgusts them with the Bible. These often say: "If that is the kind of God you serve, then I don't want to have anything to do with him." I submit that that kind of religious teaching has produced a great crop of infidels and made men much worse instead of better.

Churchman: But if the Bible teaches it, then how are you going to get around it? If the Bible says the thief may go to heaven or paradise if he confesses at death, how can you afford to dispute it?

Christian: I know that you honestly believe that doctrine of purgatory concerning thieves and murderers who make deathbed confessions, but I am going to ask you to consider that Bible text that you mention and let us see if it does actually support such a theory. We both believe the Bible is true, but we must understand what the Bible means.

Thief in Paradise

Christian: Let me have your Bible and I will read that scripture. It is found in Luke 23: 33, 34 and 39-43: "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The contention is that the thief went to paradise. What is meant by paradise? Does it mean purgatory or heaven, or where is it? The book from which you just quoted, called *The Faith of Our Fathers*, says, concerning "purgatory", that 'there exists in the next life a middle state of temporary punishment allotted for those who have died in venial sin, or who have not satisfied the justice of God for sins already forgiven.

. . . The soul consigned to this intermediate state, called purgatory, cannot help itself, but may be aided by the prayers of others on earth'. The contention of the clergymen now is that Jesus went to paradise and that the thief also went there at the same time. If Jesus went to paradise, then paradise could not mean purgatory, for the reason that he did not have any sins whatsoever and there would have been no reason for him to go there. Note these scriptures concerning Jesus. 'He was without blemish, and without spot.' (1 Pet. 1:19) 'Who did no sin, neither was there deceit found in his mouth.' (1 Pet. 2:22) 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' (Heb. 7:26) You therefore see that paradise could not be purgatory such as is defined as a place for punishment for sins.

Churchman: That is sound reasoning, I must admit. Then it must be that the Protestant clergymen are right, that paradise is another name for heaven. We know that Jesus went to heaven, and therefore paradise must mean heaven. That would mean, then, that the thief went to heaven that very day, because Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"; and that is what the Protestant clergymen teach, I understand.

Christian: No, it does not mean anything of the kind. Jesus did not go to heaven that day;

and about that there cannot be the slightest doubt. If Jesus did not go to heaven that day, then there must be something wrong about the interpretation given by the Protestant preachers. The Scriptural record is that Jesus was dead, and in the grave for three days, and on the third day he was resurrected from the dead by the power of Jehovah. See 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, and Acts 10:40. On the day he was resurrected Jesus said to one of the women to whom he appeared: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20:17) At least three days had elapsed since the death of the thief, and Jesus had not gone to heaven then. Furthermore, Jesus did not ascend into heaven until the end of forty-three days after his crucifixion. The record in Acts 1:6-11 is that on that date, namely, forty-three days after the crucifixion, and after the conversation with the thief on the cross, Jesus ascended into heaven. If paradise means heaven, and the thief went to paradise the same day that he died, as the clergymen contend, then he reached there forty-three days in advance of Jesus. Thus he would be given the preeminence over the Lord himself. That would be wholly unreasonable, and it is wholly unscriptural. In Colossians 1:18 it is written that

Jesus was the first one raised from the dead and was given the preeminence over all. In 2 Timothy 1:10 it is written that by the appearing of Jesus in heaven he opened the way to life and immortality. That settles the question beyond all doubt, that the thief had not been even raised from the dead at the end of the forty-three-day period, and, to be sure, could not have appeared in paradise before Jesus ascended into heaven. The Scriptures conclusively state that when a man dies he must remain dead until the resurrection takes place. We cannot imagine that the Lord God made a more favorable arrangement for thieves than he has made for honest and sincere men. The Bible is entirely consistent with itself. Note now God's rule with regard to honest men.

The eleven disciples who remained faithful and true to Jesus, and who continued faithful unto death, had this rule clearly and positively stated to them by Jesus, and they were told that they could not go to heaven until the second coming of Jesus Christ. In John the fourteenth chapter it is written that Jesus said to them: "I go [away to heaven] to prepare a place for you. And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He did not say that these men would die and come to him, but that at his second coming he would come for them. According to

the clergymen the thief went to heaven the very day he died, and these faithful disciples of Jesus Christ must await the second coming of Christ Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus said, in Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father." In what respect had the thief done the will of God? Certainly none whatsoever. The only thing he had done was to express his belief that Jesus was the King. The Apostle Paul was a faithful follower of Christ Jesus and a special witness for the Lord to the Gentiles and he said that he could not go to heaven until the second coming of the Lord and his resurrection. His words in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 are: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." In that same chapter it is recorded that the judgment of the dead cannot take place until the second coming of Christ Jesus and his kingdom, and you will agree that his kingdom is not yet in full operation.

The Lord laid down the rule by which all must be governed who ever reach heaven, and it is stated in Matthew 16:24 in these words: "If

any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The thief took no such action as here stated by Jesus, and certainly those who confess for the first time when they are upon their deathbed could not possibly meet these requirements. The divine rule here is that a man must follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and he could not do that when he did not start until he was ready to die. Furthermore, Jesus stated that those who will enter heaven must suffer persecution for righteousness' sake and must overcome the world. The thief had suffered for wrong doing, and not for righteous doing, and he had not even made an effort to overcome the world. These three men that you read about in the paper, who refused the clergy, what could the clergy do to get them into heaven or purgatory or anywhere else? In 2 Timothy 2:11, 12 is written, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with [Christ Jesus], we shall also live with him: if we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him." Again, it is written, in Philippians 1:29, that there is given unto us, as Christians, the privilege of suffering with Christ Jesus, and such is the condition that must be met by those who go to heaven.

Furthermore, the thief died upon the cross, and dead creatures do not go to heaven or to paradise. When a man is dead he does not do

anything, because he knows nothing. It is plainly written in the Scriptures that 'the living know that they must die, but the dead know not anything', and that 'there is no knowledge nor wisdom nor device with the dead in the grave, where they are'.—Eccl. 9:5, 10.

Churchman: But you know the clergymen say that when a man dies it is his body that dies but the soul goes immediately to purgatory, hell or heaven.

Christian: Again the clergymen are wrong, because the Bible teaches exactly contrary to that. Every person *is* a soul. No man *has* a soul; and therefore 'his soul' could not go anywhere. God formed man out of the elements of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and a soul, or living creature, resulted. That is the plain statement in Genesis 2:7. When the breath goes out of a man he is dead. It is the soul, otherwise called the man, that is dead, because a man is a soul. But if there is any doubt about it, there is another scripture which plainly says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Ps. 89:48) Every animal is a soul, because the scriptures so state. (Num. 31:28) Man is the highest order of animal, and when he dies he goes into the grave or condition of death, just

like other animals. In proof of that, read Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20.

Churchman: But doesn't the scripture say that the soul returns to God who gave it?

Christian: No, the scripture that you refer to says that the breath or spirit of life returns to God: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl. 12:7) The word "spirit" here is the same word as in Genesis 6:17 and in the Hebrew rendered "breath" of life. God gave the breath of life and God takes it away, but the breath of life is not a living creature. The theory of the clergymen is that the thief went to heaven or paradise the same day he was crucified, and they base that false theory upon the further false theory of the inherent immortality of all souls. The Devil is the one who really made the statement that the soul does not die, and Jesus says that the Devil was a liar from the beginning. (Gen. 3:4; John 8:44) The thief died and went into the grave, and he is still in the grave; and he must remain there until God's due time for the returning of the dead in the resurrection, and that is still future. There is no doctrine more plainly taught in the Bible than that of the resurrection of the dead. If men are alive in purgatory or paradise or anywhere else they could not be resurrected, because "resurrection" means raising up to life.

That being true, deathbed confessions of thieves or other criminals, or of any one else, for that matter, cannot get them immediately into life anywhere.

Churchman: Then tell me what Jesus meant when he said to the thief: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Christian: I shall be very glad to do that, because those words of Jesus are entirely consistent with every other statement in the Bible and mean exactly what they say. For three years and more, to the day of his crucifixion, Jesus had been teaching the Jews concerning the kingdom of God. Time and again he had publicly taught that Jehovah God had sent him into the world to tell them the truth, and that one great truth he must tell, and did tell, was of and concerning the kingdom of God, which kingdom God had promised to Jesus. All the prophets of God before the coming of Jesus had foretold the coming of the Messiah, which means Christ the Lord. Jesus had made it plain that he was the long-promised Messiah, King and Ruler. Practically everybody in Palestine knew that he claimed to be the Son of God and the King. The clergymen of that day were the Pharisees and priests, and it was their duty to know and to teach the Word of God to the people. They had every reason to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but they were selfish men

and knew that when the people accepted him, they, the clergymen, would have to hunt some other kind of job. They opposed Jesus and persecuted him and finally caused him to be crucified. The Roman governor then in charge of the affairs of Jerusalem offered to release Jesus and not put him to death, but, instead, the clergymen cried out for the release of Barabbas, a notorious criminal, and demanded the life-blood of Jesus. The judgment was unjustly given against Jesus and he was led to the cross and there crucified. A sign was written and placed over his cross, bearing these words: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." The motley mob was crying out against the King of the Jews; hence everybody knew that Jesus claimed to be the King and claimed that he would have a kingdom.

The clergy stood by and mocked Jesus, and incited the mob to do the same thing. One of the thieves who was being crucified mockingly cried out to Jesus: "If thou be Christ [the King], save thyself and us." The other thief, evidently, had reached the conclusion that Jesus was all that he claimed to be, and that he was the King, and that he would have a kingdom. So he rebuked the first-mentioned thief, and thus addressing his words to Jesus he showed that he believed in Jesus, and he said to him: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy king-

dom." The answer of Jesus to the thief is really in the form of a question: "Verily I say unto thee today: Shalt thou be with me in paradise?" Another translator renders this text in this manner: "Verily I say unto thee this day: "With me shalt thou be in paradise." (*Roth.*) The words of Jesus cannot be properly construed to mean that he expected to go to paradise that very day himself. He made the statement that very day that he was being crucified. His words may be properly paraphrased like this: 'Thief, you have shown by your words that you believe that I am Christ the King and that I will have a kingdom. This is real faith on your part, and when you see I am dying like wrong-doers. But on this day I solemnly put a question to you, Shall you be with me in paradise? To be sure, I will have a paradise in due time and the opportunity will be given to men to enter into that paradise condition, and shall you be with me then? You are exercising real faith to be with me or on my side this day, when the clergymen and all others are against me. Shall you be with me and on my side when I come into my kingdom and establish paradise? If so, you will have a splendid chance.'

The words of Jesus do not positively, conclusively and arbitrarily state that the thief will ever be in paradise, as many have been led to believe. He did not say, "Thou shalt," but his

words are, "Shalt thou?" The form of the phrase shows that there must be a condition attached to the thief's going to paradise, and that condition would be that after he was raised from the dead he still continue to exercise faith in Christ Jesus as King and obey his law and therefore be on the side of Jesus. Any other construction placed upon these words of Jesus would mean that Jesus then and there finally and conclusively stated the judgment on the thief regardless of what he might do when awakened out of death. The judgment takes place at the time of the resurrection or awakening out of death. (John 5: 29, 30) To change the words of Jesus and make them read, "Thou shalt be with me," instead of as they really are, "Shalt thou?" is clearly wrong. No other reasonable construction can be put upon the words of Jesus than that he propounded the question to the thief.

It will be more tolerable for the thief in paradise than for the clergymen, because on another occasion Jesus said to these hypocritical men: "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23: 33) "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." (Matt. 11: 22) According to the wrong construction that has been placed upon this text, when upon the cross the Lord then determined finally the destiny of

the thief, regardless of what he might do when the times of restoration begin. Such conclusion is wholly inconsistent.

Churchman: Well, where did the thief go that day when he died?

Christian: He did not go anywhere. He died, and the presumption is that he was buried. You may therefore properly say that the thief went out of existence and thus must remain dead until the resurrection. The thief is still dead, and will not be awakened out of death until the kingdom of Christ is in full control of earth's affairs. This is corroborated by the words written in 2 Timothy 4:1: 'The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.' In Acts 24:15 it is written: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Then all those awakened out of death will be tried and judged by the Lord Jesus as the great Judge. Jesus said: 'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection by judgment.' (John 5:28, 29, R.V.) Surely the thief had done evil, and he must come out of death at the appearing and kingdom of Christ to receive his trial and judgment. At that time, if he is still with the Lord, that is to

say, on the side of the Lord, and has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and does right he will receive everlasting life, and his life will be on the earth because God made the earth to be inhabited and made man for the earth.—Isa. 45:12, 18.

Churchman: But what about paradise? What is meant by that?

Christian: "Paradise" means a beautiful garden, like Eden. During the reign of Christ the earth itself will be made like unto paradise, because the promise of God is that the earth shall be made glorious. (Isa. 60:13; Ezek. 36:35) The thief, if obedient to the law of God's kingdom, will be given life everlasting on the earth and then he will be truly living in paradise. Responding to the request of the thief, Jesus said: "Verily I say unto thee today." The word "verily" means positively, firmly, truly or surely, or amen; or as we say in these days, all right. It is clear that this is in substance what Jesus said to the thief: 'You have made an important request of me, and you are on my side when all others are against me. All right, now I say to you firmly, Shall you be with me or on my side in paradise? If so, you shall have an opportunity for life.'

Churchman: Why have so many people honestly given this text an improper meaning?

Christian: The chief reason is that Satan induced men to misconstrue the Scriptures, in

order to hide the truth from them. One of the ways in which he did that with this text is this: You will note by an examination of the text that there is a comma immediately following the word "thee" and that the next word, "today," begins with a capital letter for the evident purpose of giving emphasis. That makes the text appear as though Jesus positively said to the thief: 'You shall go to paradise today.' There were no punctuation marks in those days. Such marks were first used in the fifteenth century. Now omit the comma and put the emphasis on the word "today", and note that it reads: "I say unto thee today [this day when all are against me], Shalt thou be with me [on my side] in paradise?" The meaning is entirely different. All portions of the Bible are consistent; and when all other scriptures show that when a man dies he is dead and must remain so until the resurrection, then this scripture must harmonize with those; and the truth is that they do fully harmonize.*

Churchman: Then the thief has not gone to purgatory yet?

Christian: No, he has not. There is no such place as purgatory taught by the Bible, and therefore the teaching concerning it is false. You can see how this scripture relative to the thief has been wrongfully applied to teach purgatory. There is not a single text in the Bible

to warrant the conclusion that anyone goes to purgatory.

Churchman: Then the priests have no authority or power to pray men out of purgatory?

Christian: Certainly not. No man has power to forgive sins. Christ Jesus became the advocate of those who are fully devoted to God, and when these do some wrong and ask for forgiveness he makes intercession for them and God forgives the sins. This is proven by the statement written in 1 John 2:1, 2, which states that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, which advocate is Jesus Christ; and then again, in the same chapter: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:5-9; 2:1) This proves that no man has any authority to forgive sins, and any man who claims to thus have authority is misrepresenting God and deceiving the people.

Churchman: In the light of these scriptures it seems that if the priests or clergymen or anyone else collects money from the living upon the representation that such money is to be used to say prayers for the dead to help them in purgatory, such method is obtaining money under false pretense and is therefore a great fraud and a wrong.

Christian: Your conclusion is exactly right. This purgatory doctrine has been worked overtime by men called "clergymen" or "priests" and a great amount of money has been wrongfully collected from the people upon the pretext that it would be used to get the dead out of purgatory. The time has now come when God will make known the truth to the people, and knowing the truth, they will turn away from these false teachers and hypocrites and will turn to God and righteousness.

Churchman: Why have not the people received the truth long ago?

Christian: Because Satan has long been the invisible ruler of this world and has blinded the people by using the clergymen to teach false doctrines to them. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4) God's promise is that at the end of the world light shall gradually come and the people will know the truth. (1 Cor. 10:11) That time has now come and the people must know the truth, and they are beginning to learn it. No doubt many a priest has honestly thought he had a right to pray for the dead and help them out of purgatory, because he had been improperly taught. Many good, honest people have believed that their friends were or are in purgatory, and have been glad to give up money to help them. But they have been wrong. Now they must know the truth, and all honest persons will want to

be guided by the truth. The value of the money is not so much. The great wrong done has been to misrepresent God by teaching that he would permit men to go to a place of suffering and punishment and permit other men to help them out upon a money consideration. Thus God's name and his Word have been defamed; and the Devil has been responsible for it.

Churchman: Then you do not think that the Catholic priest, the Protestant clergyman or the Jewish rabbi could have helped those three men who were electrocuted last night?

Christian: Most certainly not. They had no power to help them, and their pretense at so doing would be and was a misrepresentation of God. In all probability, when these poor fellows who were electrocuted are brought forth from the grave and told the truth they will have a far better chance for everlasting life in paradise than that Catholic priest, the Protestant clergyman or the Jewish rabbi.

Heaven

Churchman: If you can help me to understand what the Bible teaches concerning a man's going to heaven I shall be very thankful. I have attended many funerals and have often heard officiating clergymen say concerning the dead: 'This man (or woman) is now in heaven.' I wonder if that is true? I have noticed that if a

man had some influence over the people, and had a good reputation and plenty of money, the clergyman often says: 'This man was a good man and has gone straight to heaven.' Then I have heard the clergyman say concerning the dead: 'This man made a full confession just before his death and expressed his faith in the Lord, and when he died he went straight to heaven and is now in heaven.' What does the Bible teach about these things?

Christian: In each instance which you have mentioned the clergyman has been wrong and has stated that which is not the truth.

Churchman: Often have I heard the clergyman at the funeral of some small child say something like this: 'This little child never committed a sin, and when it died it went straight into heaven.' Many a time when I have observed the wickedness of men I have thought how much better it would have been had they died as little children and gone straight to heaven. We know that a babe is not responsible for wrongdoing, and could not do wrong; and don't you understand that the clergyman was right when he said that the babe has gone to heaven?

Christian: The clergyman making that statement was entirely wrong. The Scriptures say: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "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." (Rom. 5:12) Because of Adam's sin all mankind have inherited sin; and every baby is born a sinner, not because it did wrong, but because it could not avoid inheriting imperfection. Everyone who is imperfect is a sinner in God's sight. The only way to properly understand who go to heaven is to take the Bible as our guide.

Churchman: You seem to have a good deal of knowledge of the Bible. Would you mind telling me what the Bible says about going to heaven? I would like to know where heaven is, and how people get there, and what they have to do in order to go to heaven. Does God take some to heaven whether they want to go or not? Do all the good go to heaven when they die?

Christian: I shall endeavor to answer all your questions from the Bible.

Churchman: If I find that I have been wrong in what I have believed and you convince me from the Bible what is the truth, shall I have to join some denomination of the Protestant churches?

Christian: No, indeed no! Joining a Protestant church would do you no good. Those organizations have no more truth than the Catholics, and probably have less. What you want is the truth; and seeing the truth, you should

do God's will, and not man's will. Remember that Jesus said concerning the Bible, which is God's Word: "Thy word is truth." No man can afford to accept anything that is out of harmony with the Bible.

Churchman: Please, tell me what the Bible says about going to heaven.

Christian: The great Creator of the universe is God. He is the Almighty God and is also revealed by the names Jehovah and Most High. He caused the Bible, which is his Word, to be written for the benefit of men who want to know the truth and to do right. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) The habitation of Jehovah God is in heaven. He caused to be written in his Word: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." (Isa. 66:1) That means that heaven is more lofty and exalted than the earth. Jehovah God is the self-existing and immortal One. Concerning him it is written, in 1 Timothy 6:16, that 'he only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, whom no man hath seen, nor ever can see'. The reason is that God is the great spirit Being and man is a human creature. By his prophet Isaiah Jehovah declares that he made the earth for man and he made man for the earth. (Isa. 45:12, 18) God formed man out of the elements of the earth, and hence it is written that man is of the earth, and earthly. An earthly creature, therefore, could not inhabit heaven. If he ever

goes to heaven he must be changed from a human to a spirit creature.

The organism or body of man is flesh, and the life of man is in the blood. (Gen. 9:4) It is stated, in 1 Corinthians 15:50, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". The doctrine universally taught to the people by "organized Christianity", so called, is that all good men, women and children at death go to heaven. There being so many branches and divisions of so-called "organized Christianity", and desiring to keep the people in the proper attitude the clergy say to them: 'It matters not to which one of the churches you belong, just so you belong to one. We are all traveling different roads, but to the same goal, and that is heaven.' This conclusion is based upon the false doctrine of inherent immortality of all souls. The teaching is in substance this: That death does not mean cessation of living existence, but merely means the transition from one condition of life on earth to a condition of life either in heaven or in hell. So far as orthodox religion is concerned, earth is merely a breeding place or an incubator to produce and nourish creatures for one or the other of two places, hell or heaven.

A man of a community who has been successful in business, is a member of some church organization, has rendered public service to the people and contributed large sums of money to

the poor, ends his earthly course in death. At his funeral the clergyman unhesitatingly tells those who hear that this man was a good man and that he is not dead but that he has passed immediately into heaven. The people are induced to believe his statement, and many do believe it. The statement of the clergyman, however, is wholly unsupported by the Word of God, and is therefore untrue. It misleads the people and gives them an entirely false conception of God's purpose. If the man just described is classed as a good man and, according to the clergy, goes immediately to heaven, then it follows that heaven must be full of like men who have lived and died. However, the man thus described is not good within the meaning of the Scriptures.

The Bible shows that Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac and all of his prophets received the approval of God. (Heb. 11:1-39) They died faithful to God. Concerning David, one of these prophets, it is even written that he was a man after God's own heart. Those men not only did good to the people, but were faithfully devoted to God and to his righteous cause. They all died, but not one of them went to heaven or ever can be in heaven. Some of them died practically three thousand years before Jesus was on earth. According to the teachings of the orthodox clergy, all those men must have gone to heaven;

and according to the testimony of Jesus, who spoke with authority, not one of them went to heaven. You must choose whom you will believe, clergymen or the Bible. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said: "No man hath ascended up to heaven." (John 3:13) This is conclusive proof that not one of them went to heaven. Even though David was a man after God's own heart, and had God's approval, it is written, in Acts 2:34: "David is not ascended into the heavens."

Jesus named John the Baptist as the greatest of all the prophets. God selected John to be the announcer of the Messiah, and John was faithful and true to his commission and suffered martyrdom because of his faithfulness to God. Concerning John, Jesus said: "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than [John]." (Matt. 11:11) The reason that these good and faithful men did not go to heaven and never can be in heaven is plainly set forth in the Bible and enables one to see clearly what is required to take place before one of the human race can be taken to heaven.

The Bible is consistent: every part thereof is in harmony with every other part. The proper understanding of the Bible makes clear the purpose of Jehovah God. Man is a human creature; and since no human creature can enter heaven, which is the habitation of the spirit creatures,

then it follows that a man could not enter heaven without being changed from human to spirit. Jesus spoke with authority and he said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." (John 3:3, 6) In other words, in order for a man to go to heaven he must be born of the spirit and become a spirit creature. The statement by the clergy and other orthodox supporters that there are many roads leading to heaven is utterly false and is not supported by any scripture in the Bible. God has pointed out in his Word one way, and just one, by which the man may in due course enter the heavenly realm. This is so important that we cannot afford to accept the opinions of any man upon the question. The Bible alone is the authority upon which we must rely.

The Way

When the first man was sentenced to death God announced then and there his purpose to bring forth from his universal organization a seed which would be used as his chief instrument for the establishment of righteousness on earth and to bring man back into harmony with himself. That seed is made up of those who constitute the heavenly kingdom. The seventh chapter of Revelation is authority for the statement

that there will be only 144,000 and One of that specially favored and elect kingdom class. The One is Christ Jesus and the 144,000 are his associates and members of his body. These will be of the kingdom, while at the same time there will be a great number who will be taken from amongst men and will see the kingdom but not be of it. All of these, however, must be born again, as Jesus told Nicodemus.

Jesus became a man in order that he might be qualified to pay the ransom price and redeem mankind from death. It was the will of God that Jesus should take this course, and Jesus gladly and faithfully complied with God's will. In Philippians the second chapter it is recorded that because of his faithfulness to God in the performance of his covenant God raised up Jesus out of death and made him the Head of the heavenly kingdom class and appointed him to the position of his chief executive officer for ever. Never before that time was it possible for any man to go to heaven. The man Christ Jesus was the first one to be changed from human to a spirit creature; hence it is written of him, in Colossians 1:18, 19: "He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." He was the first creature ever to get immortal-

ity, and this he was given by Jehovah at his resurrection.

Concerning Jesus and his resurrection and appearing in heaven it is written, in 2 Timothy 1:10, that he brought life and immortality to light. Before that there was no way open for man to have everlasting life, and no possibility for any man ever to have immortality or ever to get to heaven. These facts are set forth so plainly in the Scriptures that there is no excuse for any real student of the Bible to be misled concerning the truth thereof.

After his resurrection and ascension into heaven the way was opened for man to enter that way to heaven, and then God began to take out from amongst men those who shall be associated with Christ Jesus in the kingdom of heaven. Only those living on earth at that time, or who would live on earth thereafter, could possibly be of the heavenly class, and these must meet the conditions or requirements of God before they could be taken to heaven.

A rich ruler came to Jesus and asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life. He told Jesus that he had been obedient to the law of God in every respect. Jesus then said to the ruler: 'What you lack now is this: You must sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come

and follow me.' (Luke 18:18-23) What Jesus really meant was that the affection of this man should cease to be attached to things earthly, and his devotion and allegiance should be to God, because that was the course that Jesus took.

To his disciples Jesus said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24, 25) No man would do what Jesus here says unless he believes in God and in Christ as the great Redeemer. These scriptures therefore prove that in order for any man ever to make even a start to go to heaven he must first believe that God is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him and serve him, and that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Savior of man, and then he must commit himself to the will of God by agreeing to do God's will as he learns it. Before he could do these things he must have some faith, and faith comes only by having a knowledge of God's purposes and then by relying upon God's Word. To say that a man can believe anything that he wants to and reach heaven is worse than error. It is clearly misleading, and destructive of faith.

The agreement to do God's will is not made with man, but each individual must make it with the Lord. This agreement is made only by those who have and who exercise faith in God and in

Christ. If God is pleased to do so, he makes a covenant with the one thus showing his faith; and this is called a covenant by sacrifice because it is an agreement to do God's will and it leads to the sacrifice of everything that is earthly, and this particularly includes the right of man to live on earth. No one can decide to go to heaven without sacrificing for ever his right to live as a human creature. God then gives his word of promise that such a one shall have the right to live as a spirit creature and, if faithful to his covenant, shall live forever in heaven. In James 1:18 it is written: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." The word "begat" (or "begetting") used here means to bring forth and to acknowledge by the Father that the one so brought forth is the son of God. The one thus brought forth is just now starting in the heavenly way. If he faithfully performs his part of the covenant he will receive a complete change in the resurrection from human to spirit life. God considers him a spirit creature from the time he is brought forth because he must live, if at all, as a spirit creature. Since no human creature can ever be of the heavenly kingdom, it follows, then, that God would not call any human creature to heaven or offer him a place in heaven. All those who are called or invited by Jehovah to heaven are

called after they become the sons of God, 'brought forth,' as just stated. All those brought forth receive the call, but the Scriptures show that only a few are chosen for the heavenly kingdom. Many do not respond to the call. "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. 22:14) Those who do not respond to the call by seeking the kingdom are never chosen; but if they still maintain their faith in God and in Christ they may be given life as spirit creatures at the resurrection and will see the kingdom and be servants in the kingdom but will never be a part of the heavenly kingdom. Such are designated in Revelation 7 as the "great multitude": "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—Rev. 7:15.

Those who do respond to the call for the kingdom, and who thereafter become unfaithful or lawless, suffer everlasting destruction. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13:41,42) "[The Lord] shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matt. 24:51.

Those who respond to the call for the kingdom of heaven and who devote themselves unequivocally and wholly to God and to his cause, and who continue faithful and are found faithful by the great Judge Christ Jesus, are chosen and anointed to perform a special work while on earth, and if this work is done faithfully to the end such shall be members of the heavenly kingdom. In this connection Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21) It would be far safer to take these words of Jesus than to believe the unsupported statement of some clergyman that a man can travel his own way and go to heaven. The plain statement of Jesus is that he must do God's will.

God's Will

Churchman: How may a man know what is God's will?

Christian: The will of God man learns from the Bible. Among other things it is written that the will of God is that all who have a part in the heavenly kingdom must overcome the world. To his followers Jesus, in John 16: 33, said: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He told his disciples that they must do likewise: they must "overcome the world". "The world" means the organization of peoples of the earth

which rule over the earth and which organization is under the supervision and direct influence and control of Satan the Devil. The authority for this statement is found in John 12:31 and 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

To "overcome" the world means that one must take his stand on the side of God and his kingdom, be obedient to God's will, and refuse to have any part in the affairs of the world. It is written, in James 4:4: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." "Adultery" is here used in a symbolic manner, and means the illicit or wrongful cooperation with the rulers of this world by one who professes to be a Christian. Clearly it means that the man who participates in the politics or rulership of this world, whether he be a clergyman or a financier, and who shows he is a friend to the world by upholding its schemes, cannot be pleasing to God, but is classed as God's enemy. He might be a very moral man and have a good name and reputation amongst his neighbors; but that is not sufficient. Mere morality, chastity and honesty, and doing good deeds to one's neighbor, are not a passport into heaven, by any means. The real Christian must be all of this and much more. He must be entirely for God and for his cause,

seek to know God's will as found in his Word, and then faithfully do it. This he accomplishes by faith in Christ Jesus as his Redeemer, and in God as his great Benefactor. Therefore it is written concerning the Christian: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4) No man will take this course and go on to victory unless he has absolute faith in God. No man can have this faith without some knowledge of God's way and purpose; and God has but one way, not many, and that way is not found in any part of "organized Christianity" on earth.

Churchman: But surely the babes go to heaven?

Christian: The clergy claim that little children or babes go to heaven at death. For the purpose of supporting their contention they cite the words of Jesus written in Luke 18:16: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Jesus did not say that these little children would be in heaven. This conclusion of the clergy comes from taking a few words out of their setting and ignoring the context. Other words uttered to the disciples at the same time show that these disciples of Jesus had raised the question as to which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 18:2-4 it is stated: "And Jesus called a

little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted [change your conduct], and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." A little child, therefore, was used as an illustration. A child has complete confidence in and is obedient to its parent. Likewise all those who enter the kingdom of heaven must have complete faith and confidence in God and be wholly obedient to the heavenly Father. This requires one to walk in humility or in full submission to God.

All recognize the fact that a babe has not sufficient mental capacity to make a contract. No one can even start on the way to heaven until he makes first a contract or covenant to do God's will. That contract must be preceded by some knowledge of the ransom price paid by Jesus Christ. The babe could not grasp such knowledge nor exercise such faith. The Scriptures therefore plainly show that there will be no babes in heaven. If all babes go to heaven, then it would be well if almost all were to die as babes. Nor should the death of a babe bring sorrow. Be assured that babes do not go to heaven. At death the babe goes into the grave, which is properly called "hell". It is there unconscious,

silent, and out of existence until the resurrection. At the resurrection the Lord will awaken all the babes out of death and give them an opportunity to grow up to manhood, obey God and live on the earth for ever.

Churchman: I note that often Christians are persecuted. Has that anything to do with their going to heaven?

Christian: The Christian who ultimately reaches the heavenly kingdom must suffer much opposition, and must continue faithful unto God during all opposition and persecution. The reason for that is that Satan, who is the god of this world, violently opposes God and his kingdom. Satan employed divers means to kill Jesus. The chief instrument Satan used in the persecution of Jesus was the clergy of that day. Although those clergymen then claimed to represent God on earth, they constantly opposed Jesus and persecuted him; and he told them that they were induced so to do by reason of the influence of the Devil. (John 8:42-44) Just after his disciples had been taken into the covenant for the kingdom Jesus, in John the fifteenth chapter, said to them, in substance: 'I am your Master and have chosen you out of the world, and therefore the world hates you; the world persecuted me, and it will persecute you also, because the servant must be like the Master.' These apostles did suffer all manner of

persecution, and that persecution came upon them from the clergy and the fanatical religionists. Amidst all that persecution the disciples were faithful. The faithful apostle Paul wrote, in 2 Timothy 2:11, 12: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." Thus he states the condition precedent to entering the kingdom, which is directly in contradiction of the clergymen's contention that a man can travel any road and reach heaven.

There are today many men claiming to be preachers of God's Word who call themselves "pastors" and call the congregation their "flock" and who take the title "Doctor of Divinity" and pose as preachers of the Bible but who in fact deny that the blood of Jesus Christ has any purchasing value for man. Such deny the Lord, within the meaning of the apostle's words. Of them it is further written in the Scriptures: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 4) It is plainly stated that these shall have no part in heaven, although they claim to be God's special representatives. Then the Apostle Paul adds: 'Persecutions and afflictions came unto

me, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' The Christian is permitted to suffer persecution that he may entirely prove his faithfulness to God under the test. He must prove faithful before he can be taken to heaven. Paul's words prove this: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

Furthermore, it is shown by the Scriptures that those who will be of the heavenly kingdom must be faithful witnesses of God and of Christ Jesus, making known to others the kingdom of God. Jehovah God is not selecting men merely to get them to heaven. He is taking out a people for his name, which people must be his witnesses while on earth. In Revelation 12:17 it is written that those who faithfully obey the commandments of God are the special targets of Satan the enemy, and to obey the commandments each one of the heavenly kingdom class must be God's witness. Today there are more than 150,000 clergymen in the United States, not a single one of whom is teaching the people of and concerning God's kingdom for the relief and blessings

of mankind on earth. Today there is a small company of men and women who use all their spare time, especially on Sundays, in going from house to house to inform the people of God's kingdom and are preaching this good news by exhibiting to the people the printed message in book form. This little company of witnesses are constantly persecuted by the clergymen. You must judge from the facts and the Scriptures as to whom the clergymen represent, God or the Devil. It was the clergy class that persecuted Jesus. This little company of faithful followers of Christ Jesus, who are witnesses for God and who are being persecuted, are in the class with Christ Jesus. All of such who enter the kingdom of heaven must be faithful unto God even to the very end. To such Jesus said, in Matthew 24:13: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Knowing this, and because of their love for God, the faithful men and women are determined to put forth the message of God's kingdom to the people regardless of all opposition and persecution.

Those who become members of the heavenly kingdom will, in the resurrection, be changed from human to spirit creatures, and then they shall see the Lord and will be granted the great blessing of life divine. To such, and to such only, who thus continue faithful, Jesus, in Revelation

2:10, says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In harmony with this it is written: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Pet. 1:3-8, 10, 11.

Churchman: Is it necessary for a man to be a member of some church organization in order to go to heaven?

Christian: The Bible makes no such requirement. The joining of any church organization

cannot help anyone to get to heaven. In fact, the joining of such denomination is most likely to keep one out of heaven. The clergy have told you that the man who joins a church, pays his dues regularly, and lives an honest and decent life, when he dies, goes straight to heaven. Even though such men are active in politics and engage in many schemes that defraud and oppress the people, the preachers put them in heaven. We must know that the belief of a falsehood, even though it brings comfort to a sorrowful heart for a time, results in no lasting good to anyone. The clergy have repeatedly said, and still say, that at death men who rule the world, and also the babes, go to heaven, whereas the Scriptures show that this statement is not the truth. You find real consolation only in learning the truth, and the truth is found only in God's Word.

Churchman: You know there are millions of people whom we call heathen who know nothing about God and Christ, and who are not members of any church; when they die, can they go to heaven?

Christian: No, they cannot go to heaven when they die, nor at any other time. The heavenly kingdom class is a very small number whom God takes out of the world to be associated with Christ Jesus, which class he uses for his special purposes. During the period of time which we

call 'the Christian era' God has caused the gospel of the kingdom to be preached in order to give those who honestly desire to do so an opportunity to know of and to do his will. Then he affords such an opportunity to prove their faithfulness to him. Those who thus prove that they love God and who are faithful unto death have an opportunity to go to heaven. God is not, however, trying to get anyone into heaven, and no one can be taken to heaven unless he first intelligently agrees to do God's will and thereafter proves faithful to that agreement. The heathen peoples of earth have no knowledge of God nor of Christ, and of course could not make an agreement to do the will of God.

Churchman: What proportion of the human race will be taken to heaven?

Christian: It will be a very small proportion. Jesus said of and concerning such: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) Furthermore, it is written in the Scriptures: 'God visits the nations to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name

is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.'—Acts 15:14-17.

After the few faithful ones who constitute the people for the name of Jehovah are taken out and prove their faithfulness, then the kingdom of God is set up. When the kingdom of God is in full control of the affairs of the earth, then all the nations of earth will have a chance to receive the blessings of the Lord. Those who go to heaven are collectively called the heavenly kingdom class, and also constitute 'the seed of promise' about which God spoke to Abraham: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:16, 27, 29.

Concerning that seed God said: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18) Jehovah God will make good that promise and give everyone an opportunity to know the truth and obey him and to live.

Churchman: Will all these nations have to learn about God and Christ?

Christian: All must get a knowledge of the truth. It is written, in 1 Timothy 2:3-6: "For

this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified [to] in due time." The sacrifice of Christ Jesus provides salvation for all, and then all must be informed of the truth in order that they may have a chance to accept the truth and live or reject it and die for ever. Therefore it is written, in Romans 5:18: "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And again, in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

A man must have knowledge before he can accept a gift. The time has come for the Lord to begin to give knowledge to the people, and for this reason there is now a company of men and women going from house to house throughout the land telling the people about the truth concerning God and his kingdom. There is no other means of salvation than God's appointed way. Concerning this it is plainly written— "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts

4: 12) Priests, preachers, or rabbis cannot save men. Their ceremonies have nothing to do with saving them.

Churchman: Then it is your opinion that if these three criminals that were executed at Sing Sing last night, and who refused the aid of the clergy, had submitted to their ceremonies, such would have done them no good?

Christian: That is right. Their ceremonies would have done them not the slightest good. Such ceremonies are merely formalisms employed in conformity to the rules of man-made organizations. Without a doubt the Devil is the author of such formalism and his purpose is to divert the mind of man away from Jehovah God.

Churchman: Tell me how you have been able to find out so much about the Bible?

Christian: It is not due to any mental capacity or ability that I possess. God's due time has come for those who diligently seek to know the truth to find it. I will tell you of some books that will enable you to understand the Bible. The truth belongs to Jehovah, and to no creature. The Bible contains his Word of truth. But he uses human agencies to help to find and point out to others where the truth is found in the Bible and to apply it to the facts. There is a list of books which I now tell you about which will enable you to find out all I have told you, and a great deal more. First is *The Harp of*

God, which sets forth the ten fundamental truths of the Bible, and shows you where to find them and their meaning; the second is *Creation*, which tells about God's creation of spirit and human creatures; the third is *Reconciliation*, which tells why men have suffered sickness and death and of God's great and loving provision for the redemption and deliverance of mankind; the fourth is called *Deliverance*, and exposes Satan, his wicked organization, and how God and his mighty organization will overthrow wickedness and establish righteousness; the fifth is called *Government*, and particularly makes clear God's kingdom and the blessings that kingdom of righteous government will bring, blessings to all the families of the earth; the sixth, *Life*, discusses at length God's dealing with his typical people Israel and how they were used to foreshadow the redemption and blessing of all the peoples of earth; and then there are two books called *Light*, which give a full explanation of the mysterious book of Revelation.

In connection with this there are a number of smaller books, such as *Where Are the Dead?* *Our Lord's Return*, *Hell*, *Crimes and Calamities*, *Oppression*. These books constitute a library within themselves. With them the Bible becomes a new book. You do not need any man to teach you; and you will find that formal cere-

monies accomplish no good, but only tend to blind one from getting a real knowledge of the truth. When you get the truth it will make your heart glad; and the more you learn of it, the more you will see the goodness and loving-kindness of our great Jehovah God.

Churchman: Well, we have long looked for the coming of Christ. Do you think that will be soon?

Christian: Yes. You should read the booklet called *Our Lord's Return*, and that will answer that question more fully.

Churchman: Let me ask you just one more question. Will those three men who were electrocuted at Sing Sing ever have a chance to live?

Christian: They will be brought forth from the grave in due time and will be given a knowledge of the truth; and when they learn of God's gracious provision for them, without a doubt they will have an easier time and a better opportunity of obeying the truth and living forever than the clergymen who were there to administer the so-called "last rites" to them. The fact is, so much hypocrisy that has been practiced in the name of Christ has driven many a man into infidelity and into gross crime. The Devil is the one that is to blame for this; but soon the Devil and all his agencies will be wiped out of existence and God's kingdom of righteousness will have full sway and control of all the

affairs of earth. The people will learn to love God and serve him and give glory to his name.

The clergy have told the people that the man who joins any church, pays his dues regularly, lives an honest and decent life, even though he is active in the political and financial affairs of this world, goes straight to heaven when he dies. The Scriptures show that the clergy have not told the truth. The belief of a falsehood, even though it brings comfort for a time, results in no lasting good to anyone. The clergy have repeatedly told the people that babes at death have gone to heaven. The Scriptures show that they have not told the truth concerning this. The criminals that make a formal confession at death are told by the clergy that such will save them. They do not tell the truth. You will find real consolation by learning the truth of God's Word. The truth of God's Word will free your mind from all errors. The truth is that Jehovah God is just and righteous and will give life to all who love him.

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