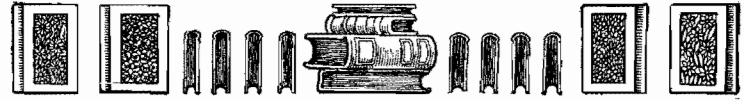


In a Catholic work called "Plain Talk for Protestants," page 213, we read: "The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is the homage they pay in spite of themselves to the authority of the (Catholic) Church." Thus to enforce Sunday observance, is to cause people to "worship the first beast" — the papacy.

The change of the Sabbath by the Roman Church would come as a natural consequence; for since the Sabbath is the sign by which God is known to his people as the only source of power and authority, and inasmuch as the papacy has exalted itself above God, and demands obedience to its precepts in preference to the written word of God, the only consistent thing remaining for them to do would be to abolish the Lord's Sabbath, or seal, and adopt in its place a rival institution, the acceptance of which would be an acknowledgment of their assumed authority, and an homage rendered them which belongs only to God. This being so, when Protestant churches unite to compel the people to observe Sunday, they thereby cause them to pay homage to the first beast, and thus fulfil every specification of the prophecy.

The forces for the final conflict are now being marshaled. The last message of mercy is being rapidly given. Soon the world will seal its destiny by rejecting the truth, and attempting to destroy God's messengers. Reader, upon which side will you take your stand? To accept the truth means to dare the wrath of Satan; while to reject it for the favor of this world is to invite the wrath of God. May you have courage to decide wisely, and finally triumph with the remnant. See Rev. 15:2, 3.



CHAPTER XXIII.

The Importance of Obedience

1. What relation does Christ sustain to the church?

"He is the head of the body, the church." Col. 1:18.
 "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Eph. 1:22.

NOTE.—The relation existing between Christ and the church is as intimate as that which exists in the human form. Christ is to the church what the head is to the body. In order for us to be live members of the church, each individual must have a living connection with the head—Christ; "for in him we live and move and have our being." Every member in the human body has an independent connection with the head by means of the nervous system. To sever the nerve at any point between the member and the head, brings immediate paralysis to that individual member. Just so it is with Christ and the members of his body—the church. When the vital connection between Christ and the individual is severed, the result is death to the individual member.

The Holy Spirit the Vital Connection

2. What is the vital connection by which Christ lives in and directs every member of his church?

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know

him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14: 17.

3. What relation do those sustain to Christ who have not the Holy Spirit?

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8: 9.

NOTE.—The Holy Spirit is the connecting link between Christ and every member of his church. To sever that link means to divorce ourselves from Christ.

4. What is the office of the Holy Spirit?

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16: 13.

5. What is the truth into which he will guide us?

"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." John 17: 17.

6. How does the Spirit guide us into the truth of God's word?

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14: 26.

NOTE.—The office of the Spirit is to lead us into obedience to the word of God. But this it is powerless to do unless we make the word of God a study; hence the importance of Bible study. Those who have the opportunity, and yet neglect the study of the written word, cannot hope for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We should also keep in mind the fact that it is not the office of the Spirit of Christ to lead

us to disobey the written word, but to obey; hence whatever inclination we may have to disobey God's word, may be understood as coming from a wrong source.

7. What admonition does Paul give us touching our relation to the Holy Spirit?

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4: 30.

NOTE.—The Spirit of God is grieved when we refuse to follow in obedience to the revealed will of God. See Heb. 3: 7-10.

8. What will be the result if we refuse to walk in the light as it comes to us?

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light." John 12: 35, 36.

NOTE.—The only possible way for us to remain children of the light is to walk in it as it comes to us. Light lingers but a short time with those who refuse to obey. Very soon they are ready to repudiate that which they at first knew to be their duty. Thus by refusing to follow in the path of duty, the Spirit of God is grieved away, and we at once become divorced from Christ.

For fear of this, many refuse to study the Bible for further light, feeling that if they do not know it they will not be held responsible. But this is a deception and a snare.

9. Why do men love darkness rather than light?

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their

deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." John 3:19, 20.

NOTE.—This makes it clear that no person continuing in a wrong course, is justified after having had an opportunity of knowing the right.

10. What class of persons come to the light?

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Verse 21.

NOTE.—Our attitude toward the light will always be determined by our love for the truth. If our only desire is to do our Master's will, the prospect of an opportunity to become better acquainted with his will always causes rejoicing. Our relation to Christ will be determined by the way we relate ourselves to the truth. If we walk in the light, his blood cleanses us from all sin. If we refuse to follow the light, our sins remain. See John 15:22-24.

11. What is the attitude of the natural mind toward God's law?

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7.

Conditions of Membership in the Church of Christ

12. What change is necessary before one can enter heaven?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

13. What change has been wrought in those who are in Christ?

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17.

NOTE.—The evidence of this change, known as the new birth, or conversion, is seen in our lives, "for by their fruits ye shall know them." Disobedience is the fruit of the carnal mind, while obedience and loyalty to truth is the fruit of the Spirit. None can become members of the church of Christ until this change of heart has taken place. In speaking of the church of Christ, we should not understand it as referring to any one sect in this world; for one may be a member in good standing in these human organizations, and at the same time not be a member of the church of Christ.

14. Where are the names of those recorded who belong to Christ?

"Whose names are in the book of life." Phil. 4:3; also Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Rev. 13:8.

NOTE.—As soon as one accepts Christ and is converted, his name is enrolled in the book of life as a candidate for eternal life. This book contains the names of all who are members of the true church. If we prove disloyal to Christ, and refuse to walk in the light, we thereby separate ourselves, from the fold of his church, and in the day of judgment our names will be removed from the book of life. Those who are converted and are faithfully walking in all the light they have, constitute the membership of the church of Christ. These at present are scattered throughout the various denominations.

Many professed Christians entertain the idea that to separate from the denomination in which they have been reared is sacrilege; but this does not necessarily follow. If this

were so, then the Reformers committed sacrilege by separating from the church of Rome. There is but one source of authority to which the Christian can pledge unswerving allegiance, and that is Christ. So long as a denomination remains loyal to Christ, we can affiliate with it; but as soon as it refuses to keep pace with the pillar of cloud as it advances toward the promised land, we are forced to choose between it and Christ; to stay longer with that organization is to become a partaker of her sins and receive of her plagues. See Rev. 18: 4. The salvation of believers depends upon their loyalty to Christ regardless of earthly ties, or even of life itself. Some people go so far as to assert their allegiance to their particular denomination by declaring that they will remain members of that church as long as they live. This is a most dangerous position, and if maintained would eventually lead to a separation from Christ. The Christian cannot pledge loyalty to any power but Christ. Our only purpose should be to maintain our membership in the one body of which Christ is the head.

The Sin of Disobedience

15. How does the Lord regard a refusal to obey him?

“Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” 1 Sam. 15: 22, 23.

NOTE.—God will not accept offerings in the place of obedience. Many are under the impression to-day that they can do about as they please, and then appease the wrath of God

by gifts; but such is not the case. God is not a man that he can be influenced by gifts.

16. What excuse did Saul make for disobeying God?

“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: . . . because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.” Verse 24.

NOTE.—When God speaks, we should never counsel with men about what we should do; for that would simply mean that we were seeking an excuse for disobedience. Furthermore, it gives Satan an opportunity to blind our minds with reference to our duty.

17. Why was it that many of the chief rulers did not openly profess their faith in Christ while he was on earth?

“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” John 12: 12, 43.

NOTE.—The dread of being ostracized by man has led many to reject Christ. They would rather be well spoken of among men than to have the honor which heaven bestows upon a servant of God. They fear the reproach of man more than they fear God. None of the martyrs of Jesus have been from among this class. Such persons repeat the terrible mistake of Esau,—they sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. See Heb. 12: 16, 17. They choose the smiles of wicked men for a short season rather than the eternal pleasures of the righteous.

No Forgiveness for Those Who Continue in Wilful Disobedience

18. What remains for those who continue to sin after knowing the truth?

“If we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. 10:26, 27.

NOTE.—There is but one sacrifice which will atone for sin, and that is the blood of Christ. But Christ’s blood atones only for those sins of which we repent. Those who continue to sin wilfully after having a knowledge of the truth can look forward to but one thing, and that is the wrath of God. By refusing to repent and walk in the light, they thereby separate themselves from the communion of his church, and the blood of Christ does not atone for their sins.

In view of these facts, it is evident that the way that leads to life is narrow and straight, and that while many seek to enter in, yet there are but few who are really walking in it: therefore our Saviour bids us, “strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Luke 13:24; Matt. 7:13, 14.

Yes, dear reader, it will take whole-souled consecration to God on our part to gain the eternal world. We must turn our backs upon everything that is in opposition to Christ. This may cost us friends and things which are highly esteemed by the world, and even life itself; but we had better lose these transient things than separate from Christ, and thereby lose the joys of the eternal world. To those who tremble before the powers of darkness, the Lord says: “Fear not thou, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isa. 41:10.



CHAPTER XXIV.

Baptism

1. What great commission did Christ give to the church?

“He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15.

2. What was the church to teach the world?

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matt. 28:20.

3. What ordinance is to be administered to those who believe?

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. 28:19. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16.