

THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Nation after nation rises, enters and occupies a place among the nations of the earth, falls, and is only known in the faithful records of history. Generation after generation comes forth, enters upon the great theatre of life, throngs the world for a little while, falls in death and passes into eternity. Upon an average, about once in thirty-three years, the whole of the inhabitants of the earth, or as many as are upon it at any one time, over one billion souls, are carried beyond the reach of all missionary effort—beyond the reach of all repentance—all gospel invitations, and so many as are not saved, beyond all possibility of salvation. During the same short period, the preachers, missionaries, writers and professors of religion of one generation are all born where no mistakes can be corrected, and no amendment for wrongs done, or time trifled away, can ever be made. Taking off from this time, eighteen years for childhood, only leaves about fifteen years for the vast work of personal preparation, for a state of boundless duration in the pure and holy society of just men made perfect, the angels of God, Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and God, the Judge of all. It also leaves about the same length of time for the good and virtuous, those with the love of God in their hearts, and lovers of mankind to make an effort to save our race. In this view of the subject—and no other can be justly taken—it will readily be perceived that what we do *must be done quickly*. Those who do anything for mankind, must engage in the work immediately and with energy. All who intend laying up a good foundation against the time to come—laying up treasure in heaven to which they can go, and upon which they can rely when their temporal supports shall all fail, must commence the work immediately, persevere in it, and abound during the short space afforded them. There must be no delay, for there is simply time enough to do what must be done immediately, if done at all. Those who have never prepared to meet God, have still greater reason to enter at once upon the examination of the subject. With

them, everything to secure their eternal happiness, so far as their own action is concerned, is yet to be done.

How short the time, in view of the amount to be done; and how carefully every moment should be employed by every person who has not been reconciled to God. What vast multitudes, throng our streets, lanes and highways, who have never seriously thought upon, much less taken the elementary steps, to come to God, and who will remain in their present condition, unless arrested in their thoughtless career, by those who have already tested the good word of God, and felt the power of the world to come. What an everlasting reason we find here for a most energetic, persevering, and godly effort to rescue them and bring them to God.

THE GRAND WORK BEFORE US

The people God has raised up in the nineteenth century and founded upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus the Christ, the chief corner-stone, have not been raised up in vain. Only a small part of their work is in history yet. What has been done is only a drop to the bucket of the stupendous work to be accomplished. It is only a foretaste, an earnest of what is yet to come. It is only the incipient movement, the inauguration of the work, the entering wedge. The great body of the work lies in the future. Let no man become disheartened if a few faint-hearted do turn back and hanker after the flesh-pots of Egypt. In all great movements some of these have been found. They were in the camps of Moses and among the first followers of Jesus. They have been the timid, faithless time-servers, afraid of the people and lovers of the world. But these are only spots in the feast, mere blemishes, and no more to the great body than the spots in the sun compared with that wonderful body. These poor little souls that desire to be *like the clergy*, or to be actual *clergymen themselves*; that want titles, and the people to call them *Dr., Rev.*; that get on the white cravat, the priestly coat buttoned up to the chin; that drop on their knees and make a *public private* prayer, as they enter the "sacred desk," and that teach the disciples to drop the head and offer a *secret private public prayer before an assembly*, are not the men whom God sends. They are the men who think the *largest offer in money is the loudest call from God*, and the call which they obey most implicitly. They can be bought and sold like sheep and oxen. God never calls such men as these. They are a burlesque on the religion of Jesus Christ; the plainness, simplicity and humility of our Lord. The idea has never entered into their heads to be *servants* of Jesus Christ. Their idea is to be *masters*. They are not thinking of obeying, unless to obey the men with the largest purses; but their idea is to be obeyed. They are not thinking of adoring, but of being adored. The third epistle of Peter is the one in which they find their likeness, and they are following the directions in that epistle.

Some of these may be reformed, and others will go to their own place. They are not the men that *run the world*; the world *runs them*.

But there is another class, that do not worship at the same altar with these, nor are they of the same stripe. They do not draw their divinity from clerical titles or clerical attire, nor from *public private prayers*, from imitating Jewish rabbis, or sectarian rabbis, from imitating ancient or modern Pharisees or Sadducees, but from the living oracles of the living God. They are not under the thumbs of rich men, nor under the influence of high salaries; nor ancient nor modern priests. They cannot be bought and sold. They are the Lord's *free men*. They have cut loose from the bondage of the world of sin, of sectarianism and the clergy. They belong to Christ. They get their gospel from him. They are his servants. They adore and worship him. They are men of faith and of prayer, too, but when they pray in *secret*, it is *in secret*, where none but Him who sees in secret sees them. They know their Bible and they are devoted to it. There is a grand army of these, we believe, as time as the needle to the pole. We cannot say that there are seven thousand in the field, public preachers, but we are astonished wherever we go to find such numbers of them, and to find their firmness and determination in the faith; and to learn, too, of the sacrifices they are making and the additional sacrifices they are determined and willing to make. They are many of them living almost as economically as we did thirty years ago, in our incipient work of opening the way.

When the British general found General Marion living *on roots*, and his men *fighting without pay*, he admitted that the prospect of overcoming such men was gloomy. So, when our opposers see the glorious army of which we speak, of faithful young men struggling with only a half support, and, in some instances, not that, and behold the love for the gospel, the Lord Jesus and their fellow-men that impels them on; and when they witness their determination, zeal and energy; that they cannot be discouraged, disheartened and turned back, they give up all idea of ever conquering them or withstanding them. Let not one word we are saying be construed into an excuse for any Christian who has the ability not sustaining these precious men whom God has raised

and put into the field. Nor need any one wait for a “plan,” nor an “organization,” or “system.” Plans, organizations and systems give no money. Men and women must give the money, if it is given at all. No man who has the means, and refuses to do his part, according to the ability God has given, to aid in this glorious work, need flatter himself that he will be a partaker in the final reward. According as a man sows shall he also reap. We know that there are hard-hearted and sordid men in the church, that do nothing of consequence, and men of this sort that will never be any better. They have but one idea ingrained and imprinted on their entire being, and that is to hang on with a grasp like death itself to the goods of this world. But the good and the true, the men of faith, and love, and zeal; the men who have their eye on a kingdom not of this world, and who are devoted to saving men and women from ruin, will not stop for these, nor brood over them, but turn away from them as they do from other abandoned characters who are past feeling, and go on with their glorious work. God will be with them, and, though poor in this world, they will be rich in faith, and the Lord will hold them up.

But what has this great army of young preachers to do? Where is their work? There is work enough for them to do. The only fear we have is, that when they look and see the vastness of the work, they will think, like one of old, “There be more against us than for us.” We have a vast amount of worldliness and carnality to drive out of the Church; conformity to the world; love of pleasure more than love of God; the love of Christ to restore; the gospel and the true worship. Where the cause has gone back, it must be recovered; where the gospel has been lost and superseded by something else, it must be restored, and where the worship has been corrupted, it must be purified, and the right way of the Lord established. Men who do not love the gospel, the worship and the things of God, will slough off when everything is driven out that did not come from God; when the only things they loved are taken away. In a few instances entire congregations may be carried away with worldly policies and appliances; but the whole number thus lost will amount to but little, compared with the grand throng that will stand together for the faith once delivered to the saints, and that will go on. What remains for good men to do is, to go on; stand fast; be strong in the Lord and in the power of his

might; put on the whole armor of God and fight the good fight of faith, and stand to the Bible and nothing else, and thus make the Bible a grand power in the earth. We have started with our Bible, and let us go on with it and carry it through the world. We have a book that nobody denies, except out and out skeptics, and one of supreme authority. Let us assert and maintain its authority, and carry it through the world. All the other books that in any way rival it, or are in anywise in the way of it, must be set aside and rendered a *dead letter*. There is not one particle of divine authority in anything that did not come out of the Bible. We must push all other books aside.

All the names not applied to the people and Church of God in the Scriptures must be repudiated and discarded, and we must determine to speak of the people and Church of God in the language of Scripture. This we can do; to this, no child of God can reasonably object. There will be no difficulty in this, when we shall have no other kind of people or Church but the people and Church of God. While we have other kinds of people and churches, we shall need other names for them. But we shall have no trouble about this, for they will select and give themselves other names, such as they think fitting and appropriate. All we have to do in the matter is to call them by the names they give themselves. If they will not permit the Lord to name them, but will call themselves by some name not given to the Lord's people in the Bible, it is their own doing, not ours. There is no reason why the Lord's people should follow their example, and not accept the designations found in Scripture, and use them exclusively. If we are the Lord's people, we can be spoken of in the language of Scripture; if we are not, then we might have some other name.

THE WORK OF CREATION

After Moses states the wonderful fact that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” without stating when it was, only that it was “in the beginning,” he proceeds to give a brief account of the state of things after this *first fact*, and before the work of the six days. He says: “The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” This state of things was preceded by the creation of the heaven and the earth. The next thing in the successive acts was to operate on material created, brought into existence; to form or fashion it. What was the first thing? “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” This was not bringing into existence, but operating on that which was in existence. “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.” Here we have the work of the first day. What was done on that day was not the same, no matter how we describe it, as the first act. It was forming, shaping, operating on material previously brought into existence.

Moses proceeds, “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And he called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.” Here we have the work of the second day, like that of the first day, forming, fashioning and bringing order out of chaos. This “firmament,” that God made, and “called Heaven,” is not the same as mentioned in the first verse, but is included in the words: “The heavens and the earth.” This is the work of arrangement, ordering, etc.

Then follow the gathering together the waters into one place, and the bringing to view the dry land, the naming of the dry land, Earth, and the gathering together of the waters of the seas; the ordering of the grass, the herb, the fruit-tree upon the earth. This was the work of the third day. Then comes the ordering the heavenly bodies, the great lights for day and night, the dividing the light from the darkness, etc., the work of the fourth day. All this is fashioning, forming, arranging, ordering, and not creating from nothing. Then follows the ordering of the waters, to bring forth the fishes, the fowl, and all the inhabitants of the seas on the fifth day. This is followed by the ordering the earth to bring forth the cattle, the creeping thing, and all the lower orders of the inhabitants of the earth, and concludes the work of the sixth day by the creation of man, or *forming* him in the image of God.

We have both the words “made,” and “created,” used and applied to this work of the six days, where it is manifestly used in the sense of shaping, forming, fashioning, ordering, arranging, and not in the sense of the word “created” in the first sentence in the Bible, where it manifestly means *creating from nothing or bringing into existence*. This wonderful act of the Infinite One, of bringing into existence the heaven and the earth—this stupendous universe—may have been performed an indefinite period of time before the commencement of the work of the six days described by Moses. In this view there is no danger. It makes the work of the Creator none the less wonderful, glorious and overwhelming. It matters not how long before the work of the six days it was that “God created the heaven and the earth,” or brought the universe into existence. Nor need we be startled at this. The work of the six days, as described by Moses, is wonderful beyond all human imagination. We can comprehend but little of it. We may well exclaim, as Paul did, in view of a different matter: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? For of him, and through him, are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

LOTTERIES

The entire lottery scheme is gambling. The desire and intention in lotteries is to get money by a base method, or, in other words, dishonestly. The desire and intention is to get money without rendering an equivalent, or to get something for nothing. The man or company that conducts a lottery knows the precise per cent. that is made in selling out the tickets. If everything is conducted fairly; that is, what they call *fairly*; that is, to conduct according to their proposed rule, some few would draw prizes of much value and some larger number will draw small prizes, while the great body of them will draw nothing. They simply give their money to make up the prizes that others draw, and make a fine purse to run the establishment. Think of the following:

1. We do not profess to know, but probably if the *green ones* that buy lottery tickets would pay \$100,000 for tickets, all the prizes they would all draw would not amount to more than \$66,000, thus leaving \$34,000 in the concern. This is swindle No. 1, to the tune of \$34,000!

2. There can be but very few who can draw prizes of any considerable value, for there are but few of that kind in the concern. The purchasers of lottery tickets would be astonished to know how few could possibly draw a prize to the amount of \$1,000, if enough would draw tickets to pay in \$100,000.

3. They would be still more astonished to know how few can draw even small prizes, and most of all astonished to know how few can draw anything.

4. The concern proceeds on a principle of dishonesty on both sides—the principle of getting something for nothing. The man that studies how to do this, and tries to accomplish it, studies dishonesty and how to practice it. In its very nature it is corrupting,

and must end in degrading a man. Young men ought to shun it as they would a viper.

NO PREACHERS ON DANCING, ETC.

No man goes through the country delivering able and finely-prepared discourses advocating *dancing*, going to theatres, playing innocent games for amusement, etc., etc. These things, like the weeds in the garden, need no advocates, but come themselves, and that, too, in opposition to all moral feeling, restraints and entreaties. They are not cultivated fruit, but the spontaneous growth that must be removed before we can have the precious fruits of the Spirit. They are the fruits of the flesh, of the carnal mind. The man who builds up churches, maintains the spiritual devotions, order, purity, discipline, elevates and ennobles humanity, must work; war against the flesh and all the works of the flesh; cultivate, be faithful and watchful. He has something to do more than to inquire, what harm is it?

The Romish Church has reached the climax in the *easy* system. She makes her members chiefly of infants before they can make any successful resistance, and then never excludes except for heresy. In this way she has grown up to the enormous number of about *two hundred million*, or one-sixth of the inhabitants of the world. Dancing, drunkenness, or any other works of the flesh except *heresy* forfeit no membership in that carnal body. We do not want to go back toward that body.

There are more than *seven thousand* or *seven times seven thousand*, remaining, who have not consented to any departure, who are to-day as determined for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as A. Campbell was in the best days of the *Christian Baptist*, and the man who talks to them about any new departure under the name of *progression*, or any other name, is not only idling away his time and talent, but letting *himself down* in their estimation from the faith to sectarianism. They estimate a man, not by his learning, his talent or money, but by his love to the Lord Jesus the Christ. They judge of this love by his

integrity to the Lord, as seen in a strict adherence to the gospel, the teaching of the Lord and his apostles; his example; his appointed worship; all he said and did; his devotion to the Lord in all respects; a settled and determined adherence to him in all things.

Men may turn away from him, and some will, as some did under the eyes of the apostles. Whole churches will turn away and go to nothing, and the names of some men will stand ingloriously connected with these ruins. The first churches the Lord established have long since been buried in ruins, but the men who spread the desolation will not be overlooked in the eternal judgment. They will there receive their last notoriety. The Lord has not raised the building now standing on the rock, in vain, but to stand the pillar and support of the truth. The main body understand that they have entered into covenant with God, and that they are bound by all the honor that is in them to maintain every inch of ground they have gained. There is, we believe, salt enough in this body to preserve it. It has the power and Spirit of God in it; and God will hold it up and perpetuate it when men who have it not will be forgotten. By the grace of God it will stand till the Lord comes. Let us labor to “present it to him a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART

There are two senses in which things are ascribed to God. 1. When he *does things* directly, as in the work of creation. 2. When he *permits* things to be done. In this latter sense God *raised up* and hardened Pharaoh. It is simply in the sense of *permission*—permitted him to *rise up* and *be hardened*. The hardening is also ascribed to Pharaoh. He *hardened himself*. This was the direct act. He did it. When the holy writer is looking at the providence of God, in permitting him to rise up into power, and assigning a reason for it, the explanation is made, that it was done to make known his power in all the earth. This is the sense in which God raises up kings and other rulers, that are bad, and uses them as vessels fitted for destruction. He permits them to rule and rule badly, do wickedly; oppress the people, as vessels of dishonor and wrath, making them examples to all the earth, in their overthrow and utter ruin, to teach other rulers and the people that they are all in the hands of the Lord.

The judgments of God have two different results on men, either, on the one hand, to subdue the heart and lead to repentance, or to harden the heart and lead to greater deeds of cruelty and oppression. When the holy writer speaks of it, in view of the case where men are hardened and become worse by it, he says, God hardened them. In the other case, where they are subdued and led to repentance by it, he says, God makes them “vessels of mercy,” leads them to repentance and saves them. The dealings of God are precisely alike in both cases, but the result is different. In one case it is a savor of life, in the other of death. The difference is not in the divine treatment, but in the patients. The one becomes a vessel of wrath, and the other a vessel of mercy. God is said to save the one and harden the other, because we have the two results from the same treatment. In that sense it is from God and ascribed to him, in both the hardening and saving. See the following:

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil I thought to them.” See Jer. 18:7, 8. This assures us, that where a nation or a kingdom repent, the Lord turns away the threatened calamity. The Lord then states the case for a nation that shall turn away from the Lord:

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” See Jer. 18:9, 10. This sets forth the foundation of making vessels of honor and of wrath. God can make either the one, or the other. The ground of his doing this is their doing good and doing evil.

When God sent a judgment on Pharaoh, to subdue him and lead him to repentance, he promised to repent and let the children of Israel go; but then hardened his heart, broke his promise and refused to let them go. This was repeated ten times on him, and every time he broke his promise and he became still more hardened, and God permitted him thus to go on till his overthrow, thus making the power of God known in all the earth, and making the hardened monarch of Egypt an example to all the nations to follow. No doubt God hardens men now in the same sense as he did Pharaoh, subdues and leads others to repentance as he did the Ninevites, who repented at the preaching of Jonah.

OUR CENSUS

In an age when people compare themselves with their neighbors, look at the comparative size of their hymn books, the size, splendor and elegance of the temples in which they meet, the amount of money they raise, their church organs, festivals, choirs, popular preachers and numerical strength, the census is looked to with great concern; but where people are greatly devoted to the Lord, diligently striving to please him and be accepted of him in the great day, they are led to think of the piety of the people, their purity, their culture; their faith, and hope and love; their efforts to save men and build up the kingdom of God, and not to be troubled seriously about how they shall appear in the *census*. We are vastly more concerned about maintaining the purity of the gospel, the faithfulness of the preaching, the discipline and order of the church, the pure worship as prescribed in the law of God, than we are about the census. We are more concerned about how we appear before the Lord than we are how we appear before man.

We are perfectly contented and satisfied with the things of God as set forth in Scripture. We are contented and satisfied with the very words and forms of speech in which God speaks to man. We love the lowliness, simplicity and humility of Jesus. It is the manifestation of infinite wisdom and goodness. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise that they are vain." He takes the wise in their own craftiness.

TRUE MISSIONARIES

The early members in our great movement in this country were *nearly all preachers*. They read the Scriptures to and talked with their neighbors, explained matters to them, and, in many instances, when the preacher came they were already convinced and ready for baptism; or, if they had been baptized ready for uniting on the Bible. This accounts for our having such large success by preaching a few discourses. Much of the preaching was done before the preacher came, by private members and in private circles. These were *missionary people* in the true sense. They were in the work all the time. They did not need games of amusement for pastime. They had no time to spare. They were all busy, and all alive and at work. The love and spirit of God were in them, and the divine influence was shed all round. They did not have a little missionary spasm, pray a week for the spread of the gospel, give a few dollars and do no more for three months or a year, but they prayed for the spread of the gospel all the time; kept at the work of spreading it all the time. They had no trouble about *plans*, but kept at the *work*, and spread the gospel. It can be spread in the same way again, and is being thus spread largely now wherever it is spread at all. If we honestly desire to spread the gospel of the grace of God, to turn sinners to the Lord, free them from the manacles of sin and death, and save them, let us go to work and do it. There is nothing to hinder us, if we have the faith and love and zeal, from carrying it forward to any extent. The people are weary of sectarianism, and ready to hear something intelligible on the way of salvation.

NO DEPARTURE FROM THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

If we are to depart from the Jerusalem Church because it was in its infancy, and not reproduce the primitive church, we should like to know how far we are to depart from it, and in what. If the faith and practice, the precept and example of the primitive church may not be adopted now and followed; if in all things we should not now have the same faith and practice, precept and example they had, we should be pleased for some expounder of the new doctrine to explain to us in what the departure shall consist, and what rule we are to adopt now. If we let go of the rule that governed the first church, what rule shall we adopt? If we cut loose from the divine, shall we adopt a human rule? If so, what human rule? Some one of these already made? or shall we have the presumption and folly to think we can make a better one than these human rules already in use?

We are not ready to cut loose from the Jerusalem Church, its rule of faith and practice, its precept and example. We have more confidence in the old ground than ever, and have no idea of departing from the Jerusalem Church, its faith and practice, precepts and example. The men that will not stand on apostolic ground, the faith and practice of the first church, will not stand on anything long. We want something reliable, permanent, sure and steadfast—a kingdom that cannot be moved. In the old Bible, the old gospel and the old church, we find it. Here is something to lean upon living and dying, for this world and the world to come. If we leave this, all is uncertainty, darkness and night. Let us “hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” and not he of those who “depart from the faith,” giving heed to seducing spirits, and not listen to “unstable souls,” or those “ever learning and never able to the knowledge of the truth.”

BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT

There is but *one birth* mentioned or alluded to in the conversation with Nicodemus.

There is but *one kingdom* mentioned or alluded to in the conversation.

The conversation is about *one birth* and entering into *one kingdom*. The whole is in the phrase, "You must be born again," or the previous phrase, "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." This figurative expression "born again," is precisely the same, or includes the same as conversion. A man born again is a man converted. In being born again precisely the same *agencies* are employed, and the same thing is accomplished as when a man is converted. This is literally a man turned from darkness to light, from the world to God. This is not done by the agency of water without the agency of the Spirit. There is no such thing as a birth of water without the Spirit. A man is "born again," not by water without the Spirit, nor by the Spirit without the water, but "born of water and of the Spirit," no matter how many fine theories are spoiled. Nothing leads to more useless theories and speculations than attempts to build a theory on a figurative expression. The literal must always explain the figurative. The clear and unfigurative language of the commission has precisely the same in it as the phrase, "born of water and of the Spirit." "He who believes and is immersed shall be saved." Believes, in this passage, is literal. Born of the Spirit, or, which is the same, "begotten of the Spirit," is figurative. The meaning is the same as, "I have begotten you by the gospel," or made you believers by the gospel. Begotten of God is *made a believer of God*. Begotten of the Spirit is *made a believer by the Spirit*. It is in some instances ascribed to God in view of his being the Author of it. It is ascribed to Christ in view of it being through his mediation. It is ascribed to the Spirit in view of his inspiring the apostles or

speaking in them, and thus making believers, and those thus made believers are said to be begotten of the Spirit, and, when immersed, said to be “born of water and of the Spirit.” This is precisely all there is in it.

There is nothing about the resurrection in it, the first resurrection or any other resurrection, unless it be a resurrection to a new life. Nor is anything in the resurrection ever called “a birth of the Spirit.” We are perfectly aware that the dead will be quickened by the Spirit, and that the Spirit of Christ will quicken their mortal bodies; that Christ was the “first-born from the dead,” the “first-born among many brethren,” and that the dead will be raised at the sound of the trumpet, but there is not one word about all this or an allusion to it in the conversation with Nicodemus. Nor is there one word about or allusion to the everlasting kingdom in that conversation. We must not make something out of that conversation that is not in it.

Nicodemus was standing on his birth-right, “born in thy house,” as expressed Gen. 17:13, for membership. The Lord sweeps this away in one sentence: “Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God.” His being born in the house or family of Abraham availed nothing. “Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God.” No matter in whose family he was born nor whose blood coursed in his veins, a man must be born again, born from above, born of water and of the Spirit, or he cannot enjoy the kingdom of God. As the Spirit is the agent through whom the gospel is preached, and the gospel the instrument by which the Spirit makes believers, the agent is mentioned for the effect, which is belief—made believers by the Spirit and baptized into Christ, into one body. It is of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of the apostles and by the word.

There is no such thing as the new birth without the Spirit, nor any such thing as entering into the kingdom of God or the body of Christ. The faith, the work of the Spirit in preaching the gospel, through the apostles, and baptism, or, figuratively, “born of water,” must be present. The man who believes the gospel with all his heart and is immersed into Christ is “born of water and of the Spirit” in the sense intended by the Savior.

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