

ASK YOUR PREACHER

FOREWORD

This series of fifteen minute sermons has been preached over a number of radio stations. Without manuscript they were preached over Station KOCA, Kilgore, Texas, and over Station KLCN, Blytheville, Arkansas. In manuscript form they have been delivered over Station KTUL, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and over Station WMBH, Joplin, Missouri. Portions of them have been proclaimed over other stations. They have always created much interest, elicited many commendations, and resulted in many requests for them to be published in booklet form. In response to such requests they are now being offered to the reading public with a prayer that they may serve the cause of truth and enlighten the souls of men who have been blinded by the doctrines of men.

W. CURTIS PORTER 1947

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 1

Preachers have an important place to fill with respect to lost souls. God saw fit to use them in making his gospel known, which is the power of God to save men. Hence, Paul said in I Cor. 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Thus we are told that it is God's plan to save men by preaching.

This plan may seem foolish; so it is called "the foolishness of preaching." But it is God's plan. Remember, however, that is "the foolishness of preaching" that God chose, and not the preaching of foolishness. We might conclude that some have misunderstood God's plan and have used the preaching of foolishness instead of "the foolishness of preaching." But in order for God's plan to be carried out preaching must be done, and preaching is done by preachers. So preachers have an important place to fill. In harmony with this idea Paul said in Rom. 10:14: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" In view of such statements we should not minimize the work of the gospel preacher.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that preachers are required to preach the gospel. Since the gospel is God's power to save men, the gospel must be preached by the preacher. If he preaches something else, he is going contrary to the will of God, and what he preaches will not result in the

salvation of the hearers. In fact, God pronounces condemnation of the preacher who preaches that which is contrary to divine truth revealed through the apostles. In Gal. 1:8 we read this statement from the pen of Paul: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." This places a great responsibility upon a preacher and condemns him if he preaches the theories and doctrines of men instead of the gospel of Christ as delivered by the apostles.

Preachers are looked upon as leaders of men; and that they should be. As preachers are spiritual leaders of men, they are expected to know more about the Bible than any other class of men. This is but the natural thing to expect, for preachers should study the Bible that they may be qualified to preach the gospel to others. When you have some question that troubles your soul, something about the Bible that you wish to know, you often turn to the preacher for help. And if it is something that is found in the Bible, he should be willing to give his assistance; or if it is not found in the Bible, he should be able to tell you so. This is the reason I have selected the title for this sermon that I have -- ASK YOUR PREACHER. I have some questions that I want to present to you that you may present them to your preacher to find out just what the Bible says. These questions which I shall present are important questions; they are questions that you have often thought about; and your preacher should be willing to help you find an answer to them. Take your pencil and write them down as we go along. Are you ready?

Well, here is the first:

1. Ask your preacher where you can find the name of your church in the Bible. I do not know the name of the church to which you belong, for I do not know who you are that are listening to me at this time. Doubtless many churches are represented among my listeners today. But you know what church you are a member of, if any, and you know the name of the church. So just go to your preacher and ask him to give you the book, chapter and verse in the Bible that mentions it. If it is there, he will certainly know where to find it; if it is not there, you have a right to know it. So ask him to help you.

I have read the language of Paul in I Cor. 1:2 in which he addressed "the church of God which is at Corinth." And when he made his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus he said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, Over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28. In these two passages we have reference to "the church of God." Then Paul wrote Timothy after this fashion: "But if I tarry long, that you mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. 3:15.

And here reference is made to "the church of the living God." When Paul wrote the church in Rome he said: "The churches of Christ salute you." Rom. 16:16. In the section from which Paul was writing there were a number of congregations, and they were sending their greetings to the church in Rome. Hence, Paul said: "The churches of Christ salute you." It is an evident fact, of course, if a number of congregations were called "churches of Christ," one of them would be a "church of Christ." Taking all of these Scriptures together, we read of the church of the living God, and the church of Christ. These were not different religious organizations but were simply different designations for the same body of people. But is it possible to read anywhere in the Bible of any mention of the name of the church to which you belong? This is an important matter, for the Bible is our guide book from earth to glory, and we should not want to belong to something the

Bible says absolutely nothing about. So ask your preacher to help you find the name of your church in the Bible. He should not become offended if you ask this favor of him.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible says the church is not necessary to salvation. So many times the statement is made that the church does not save you. Of course, we know that the church is not the Savior. Jesus is our Savior. But the statement as used simply means the church is not necessary to your salvation; that you can be saved on the outside of it as well as on the inside. Now, you have likely heard your preacher make that very statement many times; and as he is your teacher in spiritual things, he should be glad for you to want to know where to find any such statement in the Bible. Do you not look upon him as a Bible teacher? Certainly you do. Then, if there is any such statement in the Bible, he should know where it is; or if he does not, it should not take him but a little while to find it for you.

I have often read the statement of Paul in Eph. 5:23 which says: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body." If you will read the verses that follow in this chapter, you will readily see that the term "body" refers to the church. So Christ is the savior of the church. This statement could not be true if he saves men out of the church and before they enter the church. In that case he would be the savior of men out of the church but not the Savior of the church. Yet Paul says he is the Savior of the church. If the Lord saves one man out of the church, he evidently saves all who are saved out of the church. Hence, every person who goes into the church is saved before he enters. Then how could Jesus be "the Savior of the church?" It just wouldn't be possible. So the statement shows us that the Lord saves men who enter the church, not those on the outside. And while the church is not the savior, it is the institution in which the Savior saves men. We, therefore, read in Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Every saved person in the city of Jerusalem was added to the church. There was not a saved person in all that city that had not been added to the church. And what was true of the city of Jerusalem has, throughout the ages, been true of every other place. The Lord has added to the church everywhere such as should be saved. And if any one from that time to this has been saved out of the

church, he was saved when he should not have been. But in spite of all these statements, you will hear preachers constantly say that you can be saved out of the church. If you have heard your preacher say this, please ask him to tell you where it is found in the Bible.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says one church is as good as another. Perhaps no statement has been made by religious people more often than this. On every hand, from the pulpit and in the pew, you will hear the statement: "One church is as good as another; so it makes no difference which one you belong to." Maybe you have said this over and over; and you have heard your preacher preach it all of your life. Then it must be something that both you and he are interested in, and you should want to know just where the Bible makes the statement. I am not asking too much when I ask you to ask your preacher about it, am I? That is what your preacher is for - to tell you where you can find in the Bible the things he preaches. So why not use him? I expect my brethren to use me in this way. And they feel free to make such demands of me.

In Eph. 4:4 I find recorded this statement: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of your calling." This passage plainly says: "There is one body." Yet in the face of it we have hundreds of conflicting religious bodies in the world. Well, one body can't mean two hundred bodies. But what does Paul mean by the one body? In Eph. 1:22, 23 he said: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body." So the body is the church. But Paul says there is "one body." Furthermore, when Jesus promised to build the church, he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16:18. He did not say: "upon this rock I will build my churches." He mentioned only one - "my church" not churches, If the Lord built but one, and he certainly did for that is all he promised to build, then somebody else must have built all the others. And are we ready to say that any church that man built is as good as the one the Lord built? This is what we will have to say if we contend that one church is as good as another. In Col. 1:18 Paul also declared: "He is the head of the body, the church." Look at this passage in your Bible - Col. 1:18 - and see just what it says. I don't want you to take my

word for it, but it will certainly be alright for you to read it yourself and take just what it says. Now, does it say, "He is the head of the BODIES the CHURCHES?" It does not read that way in your book, does it? But it says: "He is the head of the body, the church." There is the same number of bodies there is of heads. How many heads ? He is THE HEAD. That means just one head, doesn't it? All right. "He is the head of the body, the church." So there is one head, one body, one church. And since Jesus is the head of only one. somebody else must be the head of every other. Do you believe that a church of which man is the head is as good as the church of which Jesus is the head? You must believe this if you believe that one church is as good as another.

I do not believe that I could found a church that would be as good as the one founded by Jesus, but I believe I could come as near doing that as any other uninspired man. But no uninspired man, or even inspired man, could do that. Jesus died that he might establish his church - he purchased it with his own blood. If man could establish one just as good, without even dying for it, as the one Jesus purchased with his blood, then Jesus died in vain. This would give man more power than the Lord had. So if your preacher has been telling you that one church is as good as another, just ask him for the scripture that says so. And while he is finding that for you, you might ask him how many churches are mentioned in the New Testament, anyway.

4. Ask your preacher where the Bible says to "join the church of your choice." In view of what has just been said regarding point No. 3, it is not necessary to say much about this point. But does the Lord allow men to have their choice in matters of this kind? If man is allowed to choose the church that suits him best, then the Lord has no choice in the matter. But since Jesus built but one church, do you think he will allow you to choose one that some uninspired man built in preference to the one he built? The Lord gives you the choice of accepting him or rejecting him, but if you reject him, he will see that you do not go unpunished. Why not let the Lord have his choice instead of choosing our own way ? But if your preacher has been telling you to join the church of you' choice, he ought to be able to give you the passage of scripture that says so. So go to him and ask him for it.

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 2

I do not know a better way to get before you the fact that certain religious practices and doctrines are not taught in the Bible than the plan I followed in the preceding lesson - that plan was a request to ask your preacher for certain things. So I wish to present to you a series of sermons right along this line. Having been a preacher myself for many years, I have some idea of about what should be expected of a preacher and of what should be his attitude toward those who inquire of him concerning the things he teaches and practices in religion. With the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, containing the revelation of God's will to us, we should be very anxious to do just the things it authorizes. Even a preacher should not want to practice in religion those things that it does not teach. And, if he is following the New Testament as his authority, he should be more than willing to tell his brethren just where they can read the various things he does. Consequently, I come to you again today with the request that you ask your preacher regarding a number of things that I shall mention.

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that all denominations are branches of the same vine.

You have heard this statement made many times, no doubt, when there has been any discussion of denominationalism. We know that the religious world is woefully divided, with conflicting sects of every kind. Not only do denominations differ in name; they differ in teaching and practice. Their doctrines are in direct conflict with one another. In no sense is there unity, harmony or concord, but there is discord, disagreement and division. We sometimes ask if God is pleased with a condition like this, and we are told that it is perfectly all right, for all denominations are just branches of the same vine. Now if you have heard your preacher say this, please ask him where the Bible says so. I have read the statement made by Jesus in John 15:1-6 that is often relied on to sustain this idea. But it doesn't say anything that even remotely resembles it. In this passage Jesus is talking to his disciples. He is not talking to denominations - but to his disciples. And to his disciples Jesus said in Verse 5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." He was not even speaking of

denominations, for in that case he would have said: "I am the vine, THEY are the branches." But he did not say "THEY are the branches." He said: "YE are the branches." A number of disciples made a number of branches. Christ was the vine; the disciples were the branches; and each disciple in Christ was a branch in the vine. It took just one disciple to make a branch, for Jesus said in verse 6: "If a MAN abide not in me, HE is cast forth as a BRANCH." This destroys the idea that Jesus referred to denominations as branches, for in that case, it would take a great group of men to make a branch, but Jesus said one man makes a branch. So this is not the passage that must be found. If your preacher refers you to this passage, call his attention to the fact that one man is a branch and that he must find some other passage. This one will not do, for it does not even begin to say that all denominations are branches of the same vine.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that inspired men ever invited alien sinners to the altar to pray for salvation.

This practice is very general in the religious world today. Perhaps it is practiced in the church where you worship. If so, then I do not know of a better one to tell to ask your preacher for this information than you. You are well acquainted with him; you have been in his audience many times; you have heard him preach over and over the things he believes. So just go to him in a friendly sort of way and tell him you want the book, chapter and verse where any inspired man ever told alien sinners to come to the altar for prayer that they might thus be saved. Surely he could not object to a thing like this. So don't hesitate to ask him.

I have read in the Bible of an alien sinner engaged in prayer when a heaven-sent man came to him to tell him what to do. A case of this kind is found in the twenty-second chapter of Acts. Saul, who had been one of the worst enemies Christianity ever had, became convinced of the error of his way. He asked the Lord what he would have him to do. Jesus told him to go to Damascus and there he would be told what he must do. So he went to the city and waited for that information. Ananias, a certain disciple in that city, was sent to tell him what to do. When he came into the presence of

Saul, the sinner, he found him engaged in prayer. But he did not tell him to pray on. That is what many preachers today would have told him. But Ananias did not. He was telling Saul what God wanted him to do. So he stopped the prayer. He said: "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16. To "arise" of course, means "to get up." So Ananias told Saul to get up from his praying and to do something else to be baptized and wash away his sins. Hence, this couldn't be the passage your preacher could point you to, for the man of God there followed the very reverse of the course preachers generally follow. And, too, I remember reading in the second chapter of Acts about a great multitude of sinners being condemned by the preaching of the apostle Peter. In Acts 2: 37 they asked him and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" I do know that it would have been a good time for inspired men to tell them to pray through to salvation, but according to my Bible, that is not what they said. As it reads in my Bible, Peter answered after this fashion: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. So instead of these alien sinners being told to come to the altar of prayer, they were told to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins."

Furthermore, 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. None of these statements resemble the religious practices of men who invite sinners to the altar to pray for salvation. So I was just wondering if your preacher knows where inspired men ever followed a course like that. I am, therefore, asking you to ask him for this information. Just ask him to give you the passage in the Bible that contains the practice. And then if it is not too much trouble, I would be glad for you to send the information to me.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says anything about "getting religion."

As far back as I can remember I have heard people talk about getting religion; I have read

reports in religious papers of numbers who "got religion." And I have heard preachers talk about it from the pulpit, over the radio, and otherwise. I suppose my experience along this line has been the experience of many of my listeners. Since so much is said about it, I am sure it is a subject of interest among religious people. Why not, then, go to your preacher, if you have heard him talk of "getting religion," and ask him to tell you where you can find anything about it in the Bible.

Oh yes, the word religion occurs in the Bible. However, it is not mentioned many times. In the Old Testament the word does not occur, and it is found only five times in the King James translation of the New Testament. But in all these passages it is evident that religion is something that men DO, not something they GET. Paul referred to his early religion as his manner of life: "My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Acts 26:4,5. His religion at that time was not something he received in answer to prayer but it was his manner of life: it referred to what he did. In Gal. 1:14, 14 he said: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." The religion mentioned here was his conversation, or his conduct, his manner of life, instead of something he received in some way, James says in Jas. 1:26, 27: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Two kinds of religions are here mentioned - vain religion and pure and undefiled religion. But even the vain religion refers to something the man does - bridles not his tongue but deceives his own heart. Also the pure and undefiled religion is not something one gets but something he does, for James says it is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." This refers to deeds we do. Also to "keep himself unspotted from the world." Surely this refers to the manner of living. But James says that is religion. Where, then,

can we read any thing about "getting religion?" As much as I have heard it talked about, I am frank to confess to you today that I do not know where to find anything about it in the Bible. If your preacher knows, he has learned more than I have; and I will be delighted to have you to ask him for the information.

4. Ask your preacher where preachers in the Bible were ever called by the titles of Reverend, Doctor, Rabbi and Father.

The practice is quite general in religious circles today. We constantly read in the papers of men who are called by these terms. We read of Reverend Smith, or Doctor Jones, or Rabbi Jacob, or Father Hezekiah. But where can such things be found in the Bible? Do you remember of reading of Rev. Peter, Rev. Paul or the Right Reverend Barnabas? Can you recall the passage of Scripture that speaks of Dr. James or Dr. John? No reference is made to the degree of Doctor of medicine or to other Doctor's degrees that have been received as a result of literary attainments in some field of science or philosophy, but to the use of the term as a religious title. However, the prevalent use of such educational degrees in referring to men engaged in religious work seems to ignore the principle of humility as taught by the Savior. And religious Doctors are altogether unscriptural. These are important matters in which we ought to be interested.

I do recall that the word "reverend" occurs one time in the Bible. In Psa. 111:9 I read this

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 3

I am making an effort to get before you the teaching of the Bible concerning things that are practiced in the religious world. In order to do this as effectively as possible I am asking your cooperation. And do you wonder what cooperation you can give? Well, by simply asking your preacher about the things I shall mention. Nothing should give a preacher greater delight than to be able to help someone to a knowledge of truth as contained in the Bible, unless it would be to see that person render obedience to the truth. However, one must know the truth before the truth by him can be obeyed; and God saw fit to have preachers preach

statement: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name." In this language of David we learn that "reverend" is descriptive of God's name. What right then, does man have to wear a term that is given only to God? And as to other titles worn by preachers note this statement from the lips of Jesus: "But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Matt. 23:8,9. Could you think of instruction that is plainer? Jesus simply says for his people not to be called Rabbi, for we have but one master, and that is Christ. Why, then, will any man call himself Rabbi and have others call him that? And why will men call him that? Perhaps it is because they do not know that Jesus said not to do it. But this is exactly what he said. And why will people call some religious leader Father? I may not know why people do so, but I do know that Jesus said to "call no man upon earth your Father." These men who take this title to themselves are upon earth.

So Jesus includes them. We have but one Father and that is God. We should not give to human beings that honor that is due God only. But maybe your preacher knows of a passage I have overlooked. So if he wears the title Reverend, Doctor, Rabbi or Father, ask him where he gets his authority in the Bible for doing so. If it is in the Bible, he will be able to tell you where to find it; and if he tells you there is no such authority in the Bible, then ask him why he wears such titles, and call his attention to what Jesus said about it.

the truth. The truth that concerns men today is revealed in the New Testament, and if a preacher is preaching something it does not authorize, he is not preaching the gospel. It, therefore, behooves you to check up on the things you are taught that you may know whether you have believed and accepted the truth. And you can check up by taking your Bible to your preacher and asking him to show you the passage of scripture that mentions the things you have been taught. If he is certain that he is preaching the truth, he should welcome an opportunity like that; and if he should not be willing for you thus to inquire of him, there is something wrong and you should be determined to find

out what it is. But now for a study of some of these things.

1. Ask your preacher for the passage in the New Testament that tells that instrumental music was used in the New Testament church.

Some churches have in their services regular hillbilly bands to put rhythm in your heels by playing suitable music. Others play instruments that make music a little more subdued and serious. But the type of instrument is not the thing that concerns our study - it is the instrument itself in religious service. Whether it is a fiddle or a pipe organ is all the same as far as divine authority is concerned. I am making an effort to have you see whether any of them is backed by divine authority. Does the church where you worship use any kind of mechanical instruments in their service? If so, evidently your preacher sanctions their use. Do you know where Paul, Peter, James or John or any inspired man in their day ever used them or sanctioned their use in religious worship? If you don't, then surely your preacher does if he teaches you to use them. Therefore, go to him and ask him for the passage in the New Testament that says so.

I remember a statement Paul made in Eph. 5:19. He said: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This certainly refers to praise service in the New Testament church, for Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus. He said speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. He did not say PLAYING, but he said SPEAKING. Speaking is not playing. Furthermore, he said: "Singing and making melody in your heart." Notice that it is not "playing and making melody on your harp or other instrument of music." Singing is not playing. Then I have read a similar statement in Col. 3:16. I remember various other passages in the New Testament that tell Christians to sing. But I do not recall a single passage that tells them to play an instrument of music. Yet so many people are using them in their service, surely somebody knows where the passage is found; and if anybody on earth knows, it must be the preachers. So ask your preacher for the passage. When he gives it to you, please send it to me, for I am very anxious to know

where it is. If he tells you that David used it and told others to do so, just remind him that David lived and died several hundred years before the church of the New Testament was ever established. He is, therefore, not authority for worship in the New Testament church. David offered animal sacrifice, burned incense, kept the law of circumcision and did many other things that Christians are not authorized to do, for he lived under the law of Moses and not under the gospel of Christ. But the church is a New Testament institution and must have New Testament authority for its worship. So insist that he give you the passage in the New Testament where the church ever used musical instruments. If he cannot give you the passage, then ask him why he uses them.

2. Ask your preacher where Sunday was ever called "the Christian Sabbath" in the Bible.

We hear a great deal of talk today about the Christian sabbath. Preachers, in their church announcements in the papers, often refer to their services on Sunday as their sabbath services. And many times we hear men pray on Sunday and "thank God for this sabbath day." Has your preacher been doing these things? Have you heard him call Sunday the sabbath, or the Christian sabbath? When men so often speak of matters of this kind they ought to have some authority in the Bible for it; and they ought to be more than glad to give you the information about it. So don't hesitate to go to your preacher and ask him about it.

I have often read about the sabbath in the Bible. I remember that in Ex. 20:10 God said: "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." We all know that the seventh day of the week is Saturday, not Sunday. Sunday is the first day of the week. But the seventh day was the sabbath. I recall also that the sabbath was given to the Jews as a sign between them and God to be kept throughout their generations. Ex. 31:16,17. But Paul, writing to Christians at Colosse, said: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Col. 2:14-16, According to this statement the handwriting of ordinances that concerned meat and drink, holydays, the feast of new moons and the

sabbath days was blotted out at the cross of Christ, and Christians are not now required to keep the sabbath. It ended with other Jewish requirements found in the law of Moses. And since Jesus died on the cross no man has ever been required to keep the sabbath day holy. Those who are trying to keep Saturday have the right day. in mind, but they are trying without any divine authority.

Perhaps your preacher will tell you that the sabbath has been changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week, and that Sunday is now the Christian sabbath. But if he tells you this, ask him where the Bible says so. If such a change as this has been made, surely the Bible will say something about it. But the reference just given - Col. 2:14-16 - shows the sabbath was abolished, that it was blotted out, nailed to the cross. When a thing is abolished it is not changed. The sabbath simply was taken out of the way, not changed to another day. So if your preacher says it has been changed, insist that he tell you where you can find something in the Bible about the change.

And let me make another suggestion to you. Ask him where he can read in the Bible - ANYTHING - about a Christian sabbath, whether it is Sunday or any other day. Preachers should not constantly talk about a Christian sabbath unless the Bible says something about it. This is an important thing, for all people should want to follow the teaching of the Bible. If the Bible mentions a Christian sabbath, we should want to talk about it and observe it, but let us be sure it is in the Bible. So ask your preacher about it.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says sinners are saved by faith only.

This doctrine is taught by most of the preachers in this country; nearly all religious bodies hold to this idea. If you should ask them what a sinner must do to be saved, you would be told that the only thing for him to do is to believe on the Lord, that a sinner is saved by faith only. One prominent religious body has this statement in its creed: "That justification by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." That puts it about the way the majority of preachers preach it. So if your preacher has been telling you this, I want

you to go to him and ask him kindly to show you where the Bible says a sinner is saved by faith only. Now, don't forget the nature of the request; don't ask him where the Bible says one is saved by faith, I can furnish you scores of passages that say that, but what I am wanting to find is the passage that says one is saved by faith only, for you know there is a difference between being saved by faith and by faith only. Faith only means faith to the exclusion of everything else; it means there is nothing but faith in the plan of salvation. So that is what I want you to ask him about. If he refers you to Rom. 5:1 in which Paul says, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," call his attention to the fact that while this speaks of being "justified by faith," it does not say we are "justified by faith ONLY." The word ONLY is not in it. I believe men are justified by faith - without faith no man can be justified - but I am hunting for the passage that says "by faith only." Notice clearly every verse that your preacher gives you to see if the word "only" is mentioned in them. Just to find various forms of statements that tell us that salvation is by faith is not sufficient; it must be by faith only. Preachers are preaching "faith only" as the plan of salvation. Hence, we want the passage to contain the word "only" or some other word that means that. So you stay with him till he gives you the verse that says we are saved "by faith ONLY" or till he admits that he cannot find it; for after all, he can either find it or he can't. And if it is in the Bible he will know where to tell you to turn.

Is it true that the Bible does not mention "faith only" in connection with justification? I recall one place where the expression occurs. I would like to have you read it with me. It is found in James 2:24. Turn to it and let us see what it says. Here is the way it reads: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY." This speaks of justification. It says a man "is justified by works." Now, I didn't say that. It reads that way right there in your Bible. So if saying that one is justified by works is wrong, the Bible is wrong. That is what it says. And what about faith only? Read it again, "And not by faith only." Justified how? By works, and not by faith only. But preachers today say a man is justified by faith only. I know that too, but James writing in the Bible, says "NOT by faith only." Which do you think is right? Modern day preachers or the Bible? Somehow it seems to me that the Bible must be right. While your preacher

is looking for the passage that says man is justified by faith only, show him this statement of James that it is not by faith only.

And had you ever thought of how contradictory the Bible would really be if somewhere else it does say we are saved by faith only? Not only would it be a denial of Jas. 2:24, but it would repudiate many other statements of inspired men. As faith only means faith to the exclusion of everything else, then salvation by faith only would mean salvation without repentance. It could not include repentance for then it would not be faith only. Yet the Bible tells us plainly that "God has commanded all men

everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30. And Jesus said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3. These statements would have to be nullified in order to have salvation by faith only. And it would also mean salvation without baptism, but Peter says in I Pet. 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." This is the way it reads in your Bible. So the Bible says we are saved by baptism. There are a number of things the Bible mentions as conditions of salvation, but denominational preachers say it is by faith only. Well, please ask your preacher for the verse that says so: and please send it to me when you have located it.

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 4

These lessons which I have been giving, in which I have been requesting you to ask your preacher for certain Bible passages, have been presented for the benefit of the listener. I simply wish that all may have a better understanding and appreciation of what is really taught in the Bible. So many things in religion are not taught in the Bible, but this fact might not be discovered by many without someone to call their attention to it. So I am following this course in an effort to call your attention to things the Bible does not teach. To get the most good out of these lessons you should go to your preacher, as I have requested, and ask him for the text of Scripture that mentions the doctrines and religious practices that I have called to your mind. I trust that some of you, at least, have been doing that very thing. If you have not, then it would be a fine time to begin, for after all, we are here but a short time and then eternity will come. We cannot afford to follow some religious practice or teaching that is out of harmony with the Bible. So won't you go to your preacher today and ask him about some of these things which I shall now introduce?

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says it makes no difference what a person believes just so he is honest about it.

I am reasonably certain that you have heard that statement made many times. Ever since I can remember I have heard that it makes no difference what we believe, that if we are honest and sincere about it, God will save us anyway. Perhaps you have made that statement many times yourself, and very likely you have heard your preacher say the same thing. So won't you go to your preacher and ask him for the verse in the Bible that says a thing of that kind? Likely you have made the statement because you heard preachers make it, and naturally you thought it must be so: but if your preacher has been making it, he must have some other reason for it. He claims to be following and teaching the Bible. Hence, he should make the statement because the Bible says so; and if the Bible does say so, he will know where it says it. So ask him to give you the book, chapter and verse.

In 2 Thess. 2:11-12 we have this statement from the pen of the apostle Paul: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This seems to be a very plain statement. It positively says that some would "believe a lie." Certainly there is a vast difference between believing a lie and believing the truth. The truth is recorded in the word of God; if it is not taught in the word of God, it must be a lie. But does it make any difference which of these one believes? The general idea is that it does not matter, provided one is sincere.

Of course, he could not believe anything unless he is sincere. He might pretend to believe a thing and be insincere about it; but if he actually believes it, he must be sincere. So Paul speaks of men who are sincere, for

he actually says they will "believe a lie." But what of their sincerity? Will that atone for their mistake? Will God save them anyway, just because they are honest about it? Had you ever noticed what Paul said? Did he say they all would be saved? No, that is not the way it reads. Read it again in verse 11: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth." Notice the word "damned." This means the very opposite of "saved." Yet Paul said certain men would be damned. But who were to be damned? All those who believed a lie, or believed not the truth. So it seems that Paul thought it made a difference what a person believes. He evidently thought so, for he taught that for one to be saved he must believe the truth. To believe something else, he declared, would result in damnation, regardless of how sincere the person may be. Then in 2 Tim. 2:5 we read this: "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." When people say it makes no difference what we believe, they often add: "We are all striving for the same place anyway. " And evidently this is true. We are all striving to reach heaven at last. But is striving the only thing that is necessary in order to reach that glorious reward? This is all that would be necessary if it makes no difference what we believe. But Paul tells us in this text that striving alone is not sufficient - that a man may strive and still not be crowned, except he strive lawfully. The crowning referred to is the eternal reward in heaven - the crown of glory that fadeth not away. But a man may strive and fail to get that crown. Why? Because he may not strive lawfully. No one can reach that crown, says Paul, unless he strive lawfully. But what does it mean to strive lawfully? It means to strive according to the law of the Lord. So if we strive contrary to that law, we will not be crowned, regardless of how sincere we may be. The law of the Lord is revealed in the New Testament; and if we strive to go to heaven by some other way, we are not striving lawfully and will not reach the destination we desire. This statement made by Paul clearly indicates that it does make a difference what a person believes and practices in religion. But if your preacher says it makes no difference, just ask him where the Bible says so.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible says "once in grace, always in grace."

You have heard this statement made many times, haven't you? Over and over men proclaim that if a man is once in grace, he is always in grace. In other words, they say if he is once saved, he is always saved. This simply means that a child of God can do nothing that would cause him to fall from grace - that if he is once saved, he could not possibly commit a sin that would send him to hell at last. There are preachers in almost every community who are preaching this. If your preacher preaches it, go to him today and ask him where the Bible says "once in grace, always in grace."

And while he is looking for the passage, you might call his attention to the language of Paul in Gal. 5:4 which says: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Of course, if a man can fall from grace, the theory of "once in grace, always in grace" cannot be true. The two ideas are contradictory. But what does this passage say about it? "Ye are fallen from grace." Does this look like what your preacher has been preaching? Not if he has been preaching "once in grace, always in grace." Then have him to read I Cor. 10:12 for you; or if he is unwilling to read it to you, then you read it to him. The passage says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The man who teaches that a child of God cannot possibly be lost evidently thinks he stands. So even if a Christian thinks he is absolutely safe, Paul says for him to "take heed lest he fall." To "take heed" means to be careful. Therefore, Paul tells Christians to be careful lest they fall. Wouldn't that be absurd if the Bible somewhere else says it is impossible for a child of God to fall? And you might have your preacher to read Heb.3:12. Here we have these words from the inspired author: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." You might ask your preacher these questions relative to this passage: Can a man depart from the living God and still be in his grace? Or if a man departs from the living God, is he still with God? And if he is without God, will he be saved anyway? But whatever you do, be sure to ask him for the verse in the Bible that says, "once in grace, always in grace."

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says babies were ever baptized.

He has been practicing this, has he not? If he doesn't teach or practice infant baptism, then don't bother to ask him about it; for in that case, he could not find the passage any quicker than I could. But some of your preachers do teach infant baptism. And they do baptize babies according to their idea of baptism. It is to people who have preachers like this that I am especially talking right now. Please go to your preacher and ask him for the verse that says babies were baptized in the days of the apostles. Of course, he knows where it is, if it is there, and he will be glad to give it to you in a moment's time. Then you sit right down and write me a card or a letter and tell me where I can find it. I have been hunting for a long time, but so far I have been unsuccessful. I really need some help in finding a case of this kind, for I want to follow the Bible in all things. If the Bible says babies were ever baptized, I want to start baptizing babies too; but I want the passage in the Bible before I start the practice. So please help me out by asking your preacher for the text.

If he refers you to the cases of Lydia and the jailor in Acts 16, telling you that their households were baptized and that included their infants, just ask him if households always included infants. In other words, ask him if it is possible for a household to exist without having infants in it? I wonder if you don't know a number of households that have no infants in them. Try hard and see if you can think of some. Don't you remember some households in which the children are all grown? And don't you recall some that have no children of any age in them? I know that you know of such cases. So to baptize a household would not be any proof of infant baptism. Lydia's household was made up of the women who were associated with her. Acts 16:13. If she had been married, it would have been her husband's household. And Acts 16:34 tells us that the jailor believed "in God with all his house." So all the members of his household were old enough to believe. That proves there were no infants there. So a household baptism offers no proof for infant baptism. Tell your preacher he will have to do better than that and actually give you a text that says babies were baptized. If he has been teaching you to baptize your babies, you have a right to ask him to give you Scriptural authority for it. So don't let him off till he finds it for you.

I have often read in Acts 8:12 that both men and women were baptized. But in that case not a word is said about their babies being baptized. In Acts 8:37 Philip told the eunuch that one must believe before he could be baptized. Infants are unable to believe the gospel. And when Jesus gave the great commission to his apostles, as recorded in Matt. 28:19, he told them: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them." This shows that people must be taught the gospel before they can be baptized, but infants are not subjects of gospel teaching. If your preacher tells you that this says to baptize nations and that infants are a part of nations and should, therefore, be baptized, just ask him if infidels are not a part of nations too. Ask him if he thinks this authorizes the baptism of infidels. It is an easy matter to find where men and women - believers - were baptized, but I am waiting to find where babies were ever baptized by inspired men. So I am begging you to ask your preacher about it.

4. Ask your preacher where the Bible says babies are born in sin.

I know that nearly all religious bodies teach this. And very likely your preacher does the same thing. Perhaps you didn't even know that he so teaches. But go to him and ask him if he believes that babies are born in sin; and if he does, then ask him where the Bible says so.

I recall that Jesus says in Matt. 18:3 "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If men must become as little children to enter the kingdom, that doesn't sound like little children are sinners. And again he said in Mark 10: 14: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Since the kingdom of God is made up "of such" as little children, it becomes evident that little children are not born in sin. But maybe your preacher knows the text that says they are born in sin. If not, then he will be able to find it if it is there. So go to him this very day and ask him for it. And if there is anything you want to ask me, don't hesitate to do it. I am

vitaly interested in preaching the truth; I don't want to preach anything else. But I do want to preach the truth in its purity.

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 5

I have already presented a number of lessons on the subject of Ask Your Preacher, and I come to you again today with the request that you "ask your preacher" for some information along certain lines. Preachers have existed in many ages of the past. Even Noah, who proclaimed the doom of the disobedient of his day, is called in the New Testament "a preacher of righteousness." The words of Solomon in Eccl. 1:1 are said to be "the words of the preacher." God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and "preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." Jonah 3:2. But preachers of that day were limited by the authority of God to the preaching of divine revelation. They were not allowed to preach their opinions and theories. In Isa. 8:20 we read: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The standard by which one's preaching was to be judged was "the law and the testimony." If preachers did not preach according to that, they were preachers of darkness - there was no light in them. And this same principle is true in the New Testament dispensation. Peter said: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (I Pet. 4:11). This limits preachers today to the things contained in divine revelation - "the oracles of God." But so many things are preached and practiced in religion that are not mentioned in "the oracles of God" that it becomes necessary to ask your preacher for the passages that contain his preaching and practice. So I am appealing to you today to ask your preacher about some things I shall now present.

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that anyone was ever baptized by sprinkling or pouring.

Many of your preachers have been preaching and practicing such for a long time. Did you ever see your preacher pour a little water, or sprinkle a few drops of water, on the head of a person and call it baptism? Did you ever hear him say, while doing this, "I baptize you: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" I feel sure that many of you have seen and heard just such things. But did you ever go to your preacher and ask him where the Bible says such practice was ever followed by inspired men? Well, I am requesting

you today to ask your preacher for the text in the Bible that gives such information. If your preacher has been baptizing people by sprinkling and pouring, he will know right where such authority can be found in the Bible, if it is in the Bible at all, and surely he will not object to your asking about it. He is your preacher, is he not? And you are helping to pay him to serve you in this way. So don't feel any hesitancy about it at all. If you are paying him to teach you, you have the right to ask this of him, whether he likes it or not.

If he refers you to the statement in Isa. 52:15 which says, "So shall be sprinkle many nations," and tells you this is a prophecy of baptism by sprinkling, call his attention to the fact that the marginal reading of the American Revised Version reads, "So shall he startle many nations." Thus the word from which "sprinkle" comes is shown to mean startle. And the rest of the verse shows this to be true, for it says: "The kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see: and that which they had not heard shall they consider." But what could there be in sprinkling a few drops of water on a person's head that would cause kings to be startled, or to shut their mouths in astonishment? Or if he refers you to Ezek. 36:25 which says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," ask him if he is sure this refers to baptism. Call his attention to the statement of the entire verse. It reads: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Ask him if he is willing to say that baptism will cleanse a man from all his filthiness and from all his idolatry. If he is unwilling to say this, he cannot hold to this passage for baptism. He will likely tell you that you have to be cleansed from all your filthiness and idolatry before you can be baptized. So according to his own contention, this passage cannot refer to baptism. And while he is squirming in an effort to find where any one was ever baptized by sprinkling, you might direct his attention to the statement of Paul in Rom.6:4. He says: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." While he is checking the words "buried" and "raised" as they are used here in connection with baptism, you might turn to Co1. 2:12 and find this statement: "Buried with him in baptism,

wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In both these passages Paul says men are buried and raised in baptism. Ask your preacher why Paul specifies a burial and a resurrection if sprinkling and pouring will do just as well. If he tells you that any of the three - sprinkling, pouring or a burial -will be all right, then ask him why Paul said in Eph. 4:5 that there is "one baptism." If sprinkling, pouring and immersion are all Scriptural forms of baptism, we have three baptisms. But Paul said there is one. And since Paul said there is one baptism, ask your preacher which is the right one. Insist that he tell you if the one baptism is the one mentioned by Paul in Rom. 6:4, where he says it is by a burial and a resurrection, or if it is by sprinkling or pouring which are never mentioned in the Bible as baptism. And while you are talking with your preacher, ask him where the Bible says that unmixed water was ever sprinkled on any person in any age of the world for any purpose beneath the sun. If there is such a text, he will surely know where to find it, so ask him for it.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible calls baptism non-essential.

You have heard him say this, have you not? Do you recall that he has often preached that baptism is not essential, that you can be saved as well without it as with it? I am sure many of you have heard your preacher say these very things. And if you have, you have the right to go to him and ask him where the Bible says it is a non-essential. If the Bible makes a statement like this, he will know immediately where to find it; and he should be glad to have you question him about it.

While you are waiting for him to show you the requested passage you might show him what Jesus said in Mark 16:16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Ask him why Jesus made both belief and baptism necessary to salvation if baptism is not essential. Ask him why he always puts salvation before baptism when Jesus put it after baptism. You can see that both the ideas are not correct, for they conflict with each other. Either Jesus was wrong when he placed salvation after baptism or your preacher is wrong when he places it

before baptism. Ask your preacher which is right. And it will be well to have him read Peter's statement in Acts 2:38. He said to sinners who wished to know what to do to be saved: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Notice carefully the purpose of baptism as revealed in the language of Peter. He said to be baptized "for the remission of sins." Ask your preacher why he says a man must already have the remission of sins before he is baptized when Peter says to be baptized "for the remission of sins." I am sure that you can see that baptism is not a non-essential if it is "for the remission of sins." And yet that is the very purpose that Peter gave for baptism. Since the Bible says that baptism is for the remission of sins, ask your preacher if he thinks some other passage will deny what this passage affirms. If the Bible did that, it would be a book of contradictions and would not be worthy of acceptance. But the Bible does not contradict itself. It says men should be baptized "for the remission of sins," and if your preacher says this is not true, he is the one who is wrong about it. Also ask your preacher if it is essential for a person to be in Christ. Can one be saved out of Christ? If he cannot, then it is essential for a man to get into Christ. Well, the Bible says: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27. What puts a person into Christ? Paul says we are baptized "into Christ." So if a man can be saved without baptism, he can be saved without getting into Christ. Ask your preacher where the Bible says a man can get "into Christ," before and without baptism.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says water baptism was for the Jews only.

Some preachers have been preaching this, and perhaps it was your preacher. Many efforts have been made by preachers to get baptism out of the plan of salvation. So some have begun preaching that water baptism belonged only to the Jews, that it was for a limited time only, and that it cannot be made binding on Gentiles. Have you heard your preacher say this? Then go to him and ask him where the Bible makes any such statement. Personally, I have looked for that passage but have never been able to find it. But if your preacher has been preaching it, likely he has found it. So you ask him for it, and then send it to me, as I would like to have the information too.

I have read the statement of Jesus in Matt. 28:19. I remember that he there said: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In this I can see the words of Christ authorized the apostles to baptize people of "all nations." And I have always thought the Jews were just one nation. Why, then, did Jesus say baptize men of all nations if baptism was for the Jews only? I am unable to answer this question, but if your preacher has been preaching this theory, perhaps he knows why. So ask him about it. If your preacher tells you that Peter commanded baptism for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38 he was speaking to a multitude of Jews, and that this proves that baptism is for the Jews only, ask him what the next verse means. It says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." To whom did Peter offer the promise? He said it is "to you." This referred to the Jews then present. But he also said it is "to your children." This refers to the descendants of the Jews. But was that all? No, he further said the promise is "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Has God ever called the Gentiles ? Then the promise is to them too. So this extends the promise to all Jews and Gentiles.

ASK YOUR PREACHER Sermon No. 6

When Jesus commissioned his apostles he told them to preach the gospel. Mark records him as saying to them: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Thus they were limited in their preaching to the things embraced in "the gospel." They were not allowed to preach anything not in the gospel. On one occasion Paul said: "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." I Cor. 9:16. This indicates that he had a responsibility to preach, and the woe of God was upon him if he did not discharge this responsibility. But it also shows that he must preach the gospel. He might preach and still not fulfill his obligation; he might preach something besides the gospel. So his duty was to preach the gospel. To have preached something else would have placed him under the displeasure of the Lord, for Jesus said concerning certain ones; "But in vain they do worship me,

But can the promise extend farther than the conditions upon which the promise is made? Certainly not. Well, the promise is conditioned on baptism. Hence, baptism extends as far as the promise. It applied then "to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." If your preacher, after reading these things, still insists that baptism was only for the Jews, then ask him why Peter commanded Gentiles to be baptized at the house of Cornelius. This record is found in Acts 10:47,48. He was telling Gentiles words by which they were to be saved. And the record tells us that Peter said this: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." This is specific and direct. Peter commanded Gentiles to be baptized in the name of the Lord. And he was referring to water baptism, for he said: "Who can forbid water?" Ask your preacher if Peter made a mistake when he commanded Gentiles to be baptized. If baptism is for the Jews only, then Peter did make a mistake. But he was guided by the Lord. A number of miracles were worked to get Peter to the Gentiles to tell them this very thing. So somebody is wrong; either your preacher or Peter. Ask your preacher which it is.

teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9. Preachers cannot serve God faithfully by preaching just anything. If they preach the commandments of men for their doctrine, their service is vain. Jesus said so, and it must be true.

But there is a responsibility also on the hearer. Jesus said one time, "Take heed what ye hear." So the hearer must be careful lest he be led astray by being taught things that are not found in the gospel. Paul said: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Col. 2:8. To preach human philosophy and the tradition of men, therefore, is not to preach the gospel. Such preaching will deceive the hearer and lead him away from Christ. On this account the hearer should be very careful about what he accepts in religion. So I am again asking you to search the Scriptures and to ask your preacher

concerning the things he is teaching you. In view of eternity you owe it to your own soul to make this investigation that you may be sure you are not believing and practicing something unauthorized in the Bible. Let us, then, consider a few other things that deserve such an inquiry as I have suggested.

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that foot washing should be done as a public religious service in the church.

Not every preacher has been preaching this doctrine, of course, and some of my listeners will not need to ask their preachers about this, but others have been preaching it. And some of my listeners have preachers who have been guilty of this sort of preaching. You are the ones, therefore, I am requesting to ask your preacher about this. Has your preacher taught you that you should perform this service as a public service of the church? Has he led you to come together in a public assembly and practice foot washing, just as you would publicly partake of the Lord's Supper? Then he is the man that I want you to go to with the request that he furnish the passage of Scripture that says so. If he refers you to the thirteenth chapter of John, which he likely will do, to sustain his teaching and practice, just remind him of the fact that this was before the church was built. It is often thought that Jesus instituted the ordinance of foot washing in John 13. But he did no such thing. Foot washing had been practiced for hundreds of years before. It can be found as early as the days of Abraham. So Jesus merely performed a service for his disciples such as had been long practiced. The difference was that in this case the Lord washed his servant's feet, instead of the servants washing the Lord's feet. This was cause or astonishment, of course, and caused Peter to hesitate at the idea of letting his Lord wash his feet. But your preacher may tell you that Jesus said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14. Hence, he may conclude that this commandment by the Lord is authority for his practice of foot washing today. But I am not asking you to ask your preacher for the Scripture that says disciples "ought to wash one another's feet." I knew that was there all the time. I can find many duties that the Lord's disciples ought to perform one for another. And I knew the Lord said: "You ought to

was one another's feet." So that is not the passage I am looking for. What I want him to furnish you is a passage that says: "You ought to wash one another's feet as a religious service in the PUBLIC ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH." This is the statement that must be found, for he teaches it that way and leads you to practice it that way. It is no trouble to find proof that the Lord's Supper is to be a public service, for Paul shows that it was done when they "came together in the church." I Cor. 11:20. And Jesus said: "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." Luke 22:29, 30. But can your preacher produce any such Scripture in favor of public washing? Ask him to show you where Christians did it when they came together in the church. Let him read the passage that says: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may wash one another's feet at my basin in my kingdom." Something of this kind must be produced to support the idea that Christians are to wash one another's feet in the public services of the church. So ask your preacher to produce a passage of this kind.

And while he is looking for it, you might remind him, in case he does not already know, that the only time foot washing is mentioned in the New Testament after the church was established is in I Tim. 5:10. Have him read this for you. It says, while giving the qualifications of a widow must have to be placed on the care of the church, "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." Ask your preacher if these are home duties or public services of the church. Washing the saints' feet is classed with bringing up children, lodging strangers and relieving the afflicted. Does Paul mean to say that bringing up children is a public service to be done in the church? Does he mean that strangers should be lodged and the afflicted relieved in the public worship of the church? Any one can see that these were duties to be performed at home. And washing the saints' feet is classed with them. So it is a home duty; not a duty to be performed in public service. Ask your preacher, therefore, for the passage that says to practice it is the public service of the church.

2. Ask your preacher where the Bible says there is no hell.

There are many "no hell" preachers today, and your preacher may be one of them. He may be telling you that there is no punishment for the wicked after the judgment; or if there is any, it will not be everlasting. So ask him for the passage of Scripture that says there is no hell, or for the one that says hell will last but a moment's time. While he is hunting for it, for evidently he will have to make a search, call his attention to the statement of Christ in Matt. 25:41,46. In verse 41 Jesus says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And in verse 46 we have the statement: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Are not these strange statements if there is no everlasting hell for the wicked? Note that Jesus calls the punishment of the wicked an everlasting fire. Also he refers to it as everlasting punishment. Ask your preacher how a punishment could be "everlasting punishment" if it lasts only for a minute. Jesus contrasts the state of the wicked with the state of the righteous. One will go into everlasting punishment; the other into life eternal. So we have the punishment of the wicked described by the same word that describes the life of the righteous. Both are everlasting, or eternal. The punishment of the wicked is just as eternal as the life of the righteous. If one comes to an end, so will the other. And with all of this you might read Rev. 20:10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Does this look like there will be no hell for the wicked? The book says they will "be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Ask your preacher if he could frame an English sentence that would more clearly state an endless torment for the wicked.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says a second chance of salvation will be given to men who fail to obey the gospel in this life.

I suppose you have heard preachers preach this theory. It is claimed that when the Lord comes the second time, he will set up his kingdom on earth, and all those who did not obey him during this age

of the world will be given an opportunity in the next age, under much better environments than existed in this age. Then all who wish can obey the gospel and still be saved in eternity. Perhaps your preacher is one of those who have been preaching this doctrine. If so, I ask you to ask him for the text in the Bible that says so. I have been looking for it for a good while, and I have never found it. So maybe your preacher has discovered the passage, and he should be glad for you to question him about it.

I recall a parable uttered by the Lord in Matt. 25 that shows such a doctrine is not true. It is the parable of the ten virgins. It tells of ten virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom. When finally the cry was made that the bridegroom cometh and for them to go out to meet him, the five foolish virgins discovered that their lights had gone out. They appealed to the wise virgins for oil, but were turned away, and had to go back to buy for themselves. While they were gone, the bridegroom came, and Jesus says: "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Matt. 25: 10. Then the following two verses say: "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." These virgins failed to prepare to meet the bridegroom prior to his coming. When he came he found them not ready to meet him. When the door had been shut, they came and sought admittance. They were looking for a second opportunity, having failed to take advantage of the first one; but they were turned away without any such opportunity being given. The bridegroom, of course, represents Christ. And the parable shows us that if we fail to prepare to meet Christ before he comes, it will be too late then to try to get ready. Ask your preacher why these foolish virgins were turned away if the Lord is going to give people a second chance for salvation.

4. Ask your preacher where the Bible says man is wholly mortal.

I know that it is often claimed that man is no more than the beast of the field, that no part of him survives the death of the body, and that when he is dead he is as dead as a dead dog. But if your preacher preaches this, ask him where the Bible says so. Jesus said in Matt. 10:28: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Jesus plainly

says that man is "not able to kill the soul." So if your preacher claims this soul of man dies when his body is killed, just ask him who kills the soul. Man cannot do it, and if it is killed, someone else must do it. Ask your preacher if God kills the soul when man kills the body. Ask him, if this is so, if it would not make God a partner with man in every murder committed. Yes, I know the Bible often refers to

man as mortal. But where does it say he is "wholly mortal?" That is the passage I want you to have your preacher find for you. As your preacher he is under obligation to do this for you, if he has been preaching such doctrine. So don't let him rest till he produces the Bible text that says so.

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