

JUDE, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

Jude 1, 2

Intro: For the next several weeks we will be considering in our morning services, the Lord willing, one of the four NT Epistles which contains only one chapter: the Epistle of Jude. The others are Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John. There is only one book in the OT with one chapter, the prophecy of Obadiah.

Please read it as often as you can during the weeks that we will be looking at these 25 verses. The more you read it, if you are depending upon the Lord to show you what it means, the more you will understand it, and the more you will enjoy it for yourself as well as in our services.

When it comes to the background of this Epistle, there is more that we do not know than we do know.

- 1) We do not know with certainty which "Jude" this was. There are at least six men mentioned in the NT who had this name. Most writers seem to favor either Jude, the son of James, who was an apostle (Luke 6:6; John 14:22), or Judas, a brother of our Lord (Matt. 13:55).
- 2) We do not know for whom this letter was first written. There are no clues in the Epistle to help us, nor does there seem to be any historical evidence outside of Scripture to help us.
- 3) We do not know when it was written. The similarity between Jude and 2 Peter 2 would indicate that they were written at approximately the same time, but whether Jude wrote first, or Peter did, we do not know. But it seems safe to say that it was written in the middle 60's when 2 Peter was written. So chronologically it would come before the Epistles of John.
- 4) Neither do we know the exact group (or groups) which Jude was seeking to expose. But we do know (from v. 4) that there was a subtle movement under foot, an infiltration of the church of Jesus Christ, which was determined to oppose the holy living of the people of God, and a denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But, after all, the message of the Epistle is timeless. The errors which Jude was seeking to expose had existed from the beginning of time, and were going to continue to the end of time. And so it is an Epistle with a vital message for every generation of the Lord's people. It contains a message which is sorely needed by the Church of Jesus Christ today. If the other points were essential, we would have that information. But the fact that we do not know them should make us realize that it is the message that the Lord wants us to focus upon.

Today I would like to take up just the first two verses. The

outline is very easy to see. We have:

- 1) The writer.
- 2) The recipients.
- 3) The writer's prayer.

I. THE WRITER (Jude 1a).

We have his description of himself in these words: "Jude, the servant" (or more accurately, a servant) "of Jesus Christ, and brother of James."

We know that our Lord had a half-brother by the name of Judas, and that He also had a half-brother by the name of James. See Matt. 13:55. This is why many feel that the writer of this Epistle was a half-brother of the Lord.

But the Apostle Judas (the same word that we have here in v. 1) also was called the brother of James, to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot.

"The brother of James" seems to indicate that "James" was better-known than he was.

Whatever may be the answer here, whether this Epistle was written by the Apostle Judas, or Judas the half-brother of our Lord, we can see in this the humility of the writer. He not only took a place subservient to the Lord, but also to his brother. In his relationship to the Lord, he could undoubtedly have claimed either apostleship, or a blood relationship with the Lord, but he by-passed both of them, and simply wanted to be known as "a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James."

This is a rare quality in these days when it has become so common for men to boast about themselves and their achievements, and we find even the Lord's servants doing the same thing. Jude walked in the steps of John the Baptist who only wanted to be known as "a voice crying in the wilderness."

What is "a servant"?

He was the Lord's bondservant. He belonged to the Lord because the Lord had purchased him at a great price. It was at the cost of the blood of Christ that he had been set free from his sins--from the penalty, and from the power. He owed everything to the Lord, and had given himself without reservation to the Lord. He had been set apart by a special call to do the will of God, to bring glory to God. It was his greatest joy to proclaim the excellencies of His Saviour, and to seek the accomplishment of the Father's purposes in the earth. This was not

a limited commitment in any sense of the word. Every day and in every situation he was first and foremost "a servant of Jesus Christ."

Jude would probably have been very upset to have been called the servant of Jesus Christ. He probably did not feel worthy even to claim such an exalted position, as one who was "a servant of Jesus Christ." It should always cause us to pause and to thank God that His Name and our names can be joined together even when we recognize that He is the Lord and we are His bond-servants.

But let us go on to our second point.

II. THE RECIPIENTS (Jude 1b).

Jude did not describe them as Peter described the believers to whom he was writing--"to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." He did not say that this letter was going to Rome, or to Corinth, or to Ephesus, or to Philippi, or to Thessalonica. Instead, he just described the relationship that his readers had to God and to Jesus Christ.

And this could have been said about believers in any place, then or NOW! This was not a special group of believers in any certain place, but it could have been used for believers in any place.

Note how he identified them.

A. "Sanctified by God the Father."

Some MSS read like this:

To those who are the called,
beloved in God the Father,
and kept for Jesus Christ.

In fact, this may be the right order. But let me take it up as it is given in the KJV.

There is some similarity between the Greek word for "sanctified" and the Greek word for "beloved." And there is some similarity between the meaning of these two expressions.

God has a special love for His people--there is no doubt about that when we come to the Scriptures. We are the beloved of God the Father. He has brought us into His family. And so we are "sanctified," set apart, as being forever different from all of the people in every generation who are not the objects of His special, distinguishing love. John touched upon

this in 1 John 3:1. Even Jeremiah spoke of this love in Jer. 31:3,

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying,
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:
therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

But what is the object of this love? Why has the Lord set us apart, sanctifying us? It is that we should be holy! Cf. 1 Pet. 2:9. Also Eph. 1:3, 4.

Here Jude was touching upon a vital part of his message. False teachers had come in who were not teaching holiness of life. In fact, they were teaching just the opposite. And so Jude was reminding the believers here of this position before God the Father--"beloved," or as the other reading gives it, "sanctified." Anything that makes it easier for us to sin is certainly not of God. And any teaching that does not encourage holiness of life should be rejected the very first time we hear it.

Mark this down as a major point.

B. "Preserved in Christ Jesus."

Once a Christian sees his position in Christ he will never again worry about his salvation. You and I are not saved unless we are "in Christ Jesus," but if we are "in Christ Jesus" we will never be lost. Our salvation is secured by Christ Himself.

What more do we need if we are "in Christ Jesus"?
What can any teacher add to that?

Do you remember how Peter stated it? See 1 Pet. 1:3-5.

And now the third description that Jude gave of us as believers.

C. "Called."

When you came to Christ, when you came to God, why did you come? You came because you were "called." We were not seeking the Lord; He was seeking us. We did not call upon Him first; He called us. And if He had not sovereignly and initially called us, we would still be in our sins.

You see, this whole business of salvation was not our idea, it was HIS! Believers need to learn this, and never forget it.

And yet we are so falsely taught about the so-called freedom of the human will that we hear practically nothing of the sovereignty of the divine will. We ought to see written over the head of every man, woman, boy, and girl, that we meet throughout the week: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).

This is what we call the effectual call. We send out a general call to all men to seek the Lord, but the Word accomplishes what pleases the Lord--and He makes the preaching of God effectual in the lives of the people He has chosen for salvation.

I never tire of reading 2 Thess 2:13, 14 because that explains to me why I am saved, and why you are saved. Let me read it to you again. (Read.)

So you see Jude was speaking to a very special group of people and pointing out some very wonderful things about them, and about Himself, things that were the result of the marvelous grace of God displayed in the coming and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now we come to the prayer.

III. THE WRITER'S PRAYER (Jude 2).

Notice that Jude seems to have a love for groups of three. You can see it twice in verse 1, and we see it again here in v. 2.

How should we pray for each other? How should we want other believers to pray for us? What can we always be sure that the people of God throughout the world will need, regardless of where they are?

Our answer is found here in v. 2--as well as in other places throughout the Scriptures. Here we see that three things the people of God will always need are "mercy . . . peace, and love." And we do not need them in meager supply, but we need them to "be multiplied" to us.

A. "Mercy."

What is "mercy"?

Perhaps the best answer that we have to that question is to be found in Heb. 4:14-16.

Do you have times of need? I am not speaking now primarily of physical or material needs. I am

thinking about spiritual needs! How are things between you and the Lord. Is there sin that needs to be confessed? Have you displeased the Lord in some way? Have you failed Him? Is your heart cold toward Him?

Jeremiah spoke of the mercy of the Lord in Lam. 3:22-26. Let me read those verses to you. (Read.) The Lord's mercies are His compassions--and they are ours in a never-ending supply!

We stand in constant need of the mercy of the Lord.

B. "Peace."

You know, it doesn't take very much to show us that we stand in constant need of the Lord's peace. We are all brave until something goes wrong, and then we get to see how really fragile we are. We are very breakable.

How do we get peace? We get it from the Lord in answer to prayer, and through the Word. Cf. Phil. 4:6, 7; Isa. 26:3, 4; Psa. 119:165. Also remember our Lord's words in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you . . ."

We stand in constant need of the peace of the Lord.

C. "Love."

Perhaps Jude was saying something like this: We need mercy in our relationship with God. We need peace in connection with our circumstances. We need love in our fellowship with each other.

False teaching adversely affects all of these. False teaching affects our fellowship and hinders our love for each other.

And just as there is a special love that God has for His people, so there is a special love that He puts in our hearts for each other. The people of the world know nothing about this divine love of God. It is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

Perhaps Jude was also saying that we have mercy from God, peace through Jesus Christ, and love from the Holy Spirit.

And then to cap it all off in a most wonderful way, Jude

said in his prayer, "Lord, let all three of these be 'multiplied.'" God does not just give us enough; He gives us more than enough. He does not do what we think He will do, but He does "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

Concl: Let me ask you: What false teacher could possibly add to what we already have in Christ? If the Lord is so sufficient, then let us never look beyond the Lord for the supply of our needs from day to day.

Oh, the importance of learning who our spiritual leaders are. And who we are in Christ. And the need we have to pray for each other, and to learn how we should pray for each other. When these truths are in our hearts it is going to be very, very unlikely that any false teacher can ever get us to believe that he has more to give us than we already have in Christ.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORD
Jude 3

Intro: In his book, The Christian Ministry, Charles Bridges, a Church of England pastor who lived in the last century, said that

The Great Head of the Church has ordained three grand repositories of his truth.

Before I go farther into his comment, perhaps I should explain what a repository is for any who may not be familiar with that word.

A repository is a place where something is placed for safe-keeping. In this case we must not think of a repository like a safety deposit box, or something locked up in a vault. The truth of the Word of God is not to be locked up and hidden from view, but it is to be used. However, it is to be used with great care, and every provision is to be made for its preservation.

Perhaps we could think of it like the manner in which the President of the United States is protected by the Secret Service. They are to guard the President wherever he goes, even it costs them their own lives. They are charged with that responsibility.

Now God has entrusted His truth to three such repositories. Mr. Bridges went on to say that the three great repositories are:

- 1) The Scriptures.
- 2) In the hearts of His people.
- 3) In the Christian Ministry. (See The Christian Ministry, p. 2.)

These three repositories do not function independently of the Lord, but these are the instruments that He uses in every generation for the preservation and the spread of His truth.

- 1) The Lord directed in the writing of the Scriptures, and He has preserved this written record from being destroyed even though throughout history there have been many attempts to destroy it. It is still with us today, and has been translated into more languages than at any other time in history.
- 2) Instead of saying, "in the hearts of His people," let us say, "In His Church."
- 3) Finally, every man of God, called by God into the ministry of the Word of God, is also charged to preserve the preaching of the Word from any and all corrupting influences.

Today we are not going to talk about how the truth of God has been preserved in its written form. We are going to be

looking into it, and we all can be thankful that it has been preserved. But we can talk about that at some later time.

Neither are we going to talk about the responsibility of the Christian Ministry, pastors, to protect the truth.

But we do want to think from our text, Jude 3, about the role that each of you has in this as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. We need to think of this also as it relates to each true local church. But this comes down to each individual Christian, and what is going on in each one of our hearts.

Obviously we expect pastors to stand for the truth of God, to defend it, and to proclaim it. But every Christian needs to feel his or her responsibility to make sure that the Word of God is preserved in every generation.

This is what Jude had in mind when he wrote the third verse of this short Epistle. Let me read it to you. (READ.) This is a responsibility which none of us can escape, and the more we give ourselves to fulfilling Jude's charge, the greater will be the power and blessing that the church will experience in serving the Lord.

Jude had just finished his greeting. In v. 3 he got down to the heart of what he had to say; this is the reason for his writing.

Actually we have in this verse all three of the repositories which Mr. Bridges mentioned in his book.

- 1) Jude was the minister.
- 2) The Lord was using him to be one who wrote the Scriptures.
- 3) And he was charging the people of God with their place in this ministry.

He began by speaking of . . .

- I. HIS ORIGINAL PLAN: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation."

Some feel that this was a letter that he never wrote. That may be true. And yet, when we read through this Epistle we can see that Jude made some very clear and powerful statements concerning the Gospel in this letter. See vv. 1, 4, 20-25. He did not ignore the Gospel although a situation had arisen which made him go beyond what he had originally intended to do.

But let us look at what he said.

- A. "Beloved."

This followed his mention of "love" in v. 2.

When we speak of "love" as Christians, we speak of God's love for us, our love for God, and then our love for each other. We are in a great fellowship of love. There is nothing like it in all of the world.

And so when Jude said, "Beloved," it is easy to see that he had one thing in mind, and possibly two.

- 1) He was expressing how he felt about the people of God. He loved them! They were dear to him. And this, humanly speaking, was what had moved him to write to them.
- 2) But they were also the beloved of God. Once we understand how precious the Lord's people are to the Lord, the greater will be our love for them, and our concern for them.

This is the great distinguishing mark of believers: WE LOVE EACH OTHER WITH THE LOVE THAT GOD HAD "SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US" (Rom. 5:5). Speaking of Jude and the Christians who first received this letter, a pastor should love his people, and the people should love their pastor, and the people should love each other-- because we all are special people: the beloved ones of God!

- B. "I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation."

No one should be able to avoid the fact that the NT especially teaches us the importance of writing--writing letters! There is a real ministry for all of us in writing letters, and we should not neglect it.

To be diligent in doing anything means two things:

- 1) You look upon it as being very, very important.
- 2) Because it is something important, you are not going to delay in getting it done, but you are going to lay aside everything else that you possibly can in order to get it done.

"All diligence" means that nothing had greater priority at the moment for Jude than this: WRITING UNTO THEM OF THEIR COMMON SALVATION.

It is so easy for us to put things off, even important things. But when the Lord puts in our hearts that sense of urgency, we must do it now!

I do not know what kind of mail they had in that day, but this is a letter that would go "SPECIAL DELIVERY."

But what was so important about this? What message did Jude have to send to these Christians, whoever they were and wherever they might have been--things which we do not know?

Note what he said:

C. "To write unto you of the common salvation."

Jude's purpose in writing was to see them more deeply grounded in the truth, and especially in the truth of salvation! This is the main message of the Bible. It is an inexhaustible subject. As long as we live we will be, and should be, learning more about this wonderful salvation that we have in Christ.

Let us not spend our time on trivia when we write. Make your letter a blessing. What a marvelous thing it would be if we always sought to give others something from the Word which would make the Lord and the Gospel more precious to them.

And in view of what we are going to see in a moment in our text about contending for the faith, let us remember that we cannot protect or proclaim that which we do not know. Therefore, let us give our lives to learning about this "salvation," and helping others to know more about it, too.

But in what sense is it "common"?

We cannot say that it is ordinary. There is nothing ordinary about it. Remember what Paul said about it in 1 Cor. 2:9. It is the most wonderful, the most exalted, the most glorious message ever to read the hearts of men. So it is not "common" in that sense.

But it is "common" in that it pertains equally to all. There is only one salvation! There is just one Gospel for Jews and for Gentiles, for rich and for poor, for the educated and the uneducated--draw any contrast that you want to draw, there is only one way in which any person can be saved.

So Jude was not going to write about a subject which was unknown to them. It was well-known. But he wanted to see them established more completely in the truth of the Gospel, in what he called later in this verse, "the faith."

But in the middle of this verse we see evidence of . . .

II. JUDE'S REVISED PLAN: "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

A. "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you."

An emergency had arisen. How Jude found out about it, we do not know. But if he felt an urgency about his original plan, he was ever more exercised about this special need.

They not only needed his teaching, but they needed his exhortation. It was a problem that they should not take lightly, nor should they try to ignore it. Something had to be done, and done right away!

The Lord willing, we will look at the problem next week. But for now, notice what it was in v. 4. Great issues were being threatened--the grace of God, and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what did Jude want them to do?

B. "That ye earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

1. "That ye earnestly contend."

To contend is:

- 1) To take a stand against someone. It is to let a person know that you do not believe what he believes, and you will not be a party to what he teaches.
- 2) To engage in combat with them. We do not do this physically, but in speaking, in writing, we are to be able from the Scriptures to show why the false teaching is false. The child of God cannot remain silent when false teaching is being spread.

"Earnestly contend" is the translation of one word in the Greek, but it is a very powerful word, and so the translators have tried to convey with meaning by using the word "earnestly." The false teacher is to learn that he is really up against strong opposition which is not going to quit!

But what are we to contend for?

2. "For the faith."

In this context, "the faith" is "the common salvation," the Gospel!

See v. 4: It has to do with the grace of God. It has to do with our Lord Jesus Christ. See v. 1: It has to do with the sovereign work of God. It is not a human work, but a divine work. And we need to be prepared to "contend" for any departure from the truth of the Gospel as we have it in the Word of God.

3. "Which was once delivered unto the saints."

Remember what I said about a repository? Here Jude was setting before "the saints," the people of God, their responsibility.

"Delivered" simply means, given. The people of God did not invent it. They did not deserve such a salvation, or such a responsibility. It was sovereignly given to them by God.

And it was "once delivered," meaning once-for-all! The message will never be changed, nor, as long as we are in this life, will the need to defend it be changed. There will always be threats against the Gospel. They may be doctrinal, or they may be practical. There are practical assaults when you see Christians behaving in a way that is inconsistent with the Gospel message. Whatever the nature of the opposition, we cannot be silent when the Gospel of the grace of God is under attack. We must stand for the truth regardless of what it may mean to us!

Concl: What a responsibility! Only God can give us the wisdom and the courage to be faithful to such a charge. We have excellent examples of what it means to contend for the faith when we look at the ministries of the Lord Jesus, of the Apostle Paul, of the Apostle Peter, of Jude, of James—of all of the NT writers. Not one of them could avoid it.

The same was true of the OT prophets. There was a constant need to contend for the truth both within and outside of the Church.

Note how Paul approached this subject with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-31.

We are not to be seeking trouble, but wherever we find it we must fearlessly take our stand for God and for His holy Word.

THE FALSE TEACHERS

Jude 4

Intro: In v. 3 of his Epistle, Jude told his readers that he had intended to write to them about the salvation which all of them had a common interest in, but then, on learning about what was going on among them, he changed his plans.

The problem which caused this change is mentioned in v. 4 which we will consider today. False teachers had come in, and they were busy doing their evil work. Jude could not ignore this, nor did he take it lightly. He was, in effect, seeking to mobilize the church to take a stand against these teachers. That is the point of v. 3. The seriousness of the problem is clearly described in v. 4.

There are three main points in this verse:

- 1) Where they were.
- 2) Who they were.
- 3) What they were teaching.

Concerning WHERE THEY WERE, we can say that they were in the church.

Concerning WHO THEY WERE, Jude said two things:

- 1) They were "certain men . . . before of old ordained to this condemnation."

Also,

- 2) They were "ungodly men."

Finally, concerning WHAT THEY WERE TEACHING we also have two things:

- 1) They were changing the grace of God into something which it was not.
- 2) They were denying that Jesus Christ was the Lord. It seems here that Jude was not speaking about God the Father and Christ, but only about Christ.

When we understand this verse, we will see why Jude was so greatly exercised in his soul about what was going on. It is hard to get people concerned about doctrine in our day, but that was not the case when the NT was written. All of the NT writers manifested great concern whenever the truth of the Word of God was under attack.

Let us look at the verse in detail. Remember that we are thinking this morning about THE FALSE TEACHERS.

I. WHERE THEY WERE.

Perhaps I could have given this the heading, WHERE THEY

WERE, AND HOW THEY GOT THERE, because I am thinking about that first part of v. 4 which says this: "For there are certain men crept in unawares."

False teachers rarely, if ever, fly their true colors. They try to conceal who they are and what they are doing until they feel that they are in a strong enough position to let themselves be known.

"Crept in unawares" hardly needs to be explained. It means that slowly and steadily, but secretly, they gradually made their way into the church. The expression indicates that they wanted to get "in" with the people, and possibly even with the leaders of the church. When Jude wrote it seems that they were fairly well accepted by the people. Perhaps they were likable men, friendly, men who had shown a special interest in the people, but, whatever the situation may have been, they were "in"! And, at the time, no one suspected that they were up to something. Perhaps even at this time there were many in the church who were hesitant about believing that they were actually false teachers. But Jude knew! And he, in this brief Epistle, was doing what he wanted the whole church to do: take a stand for the truth, and get rid of these false teachers. We do not know how many there were, but it is clear that there was more than one. Jude said, "Certain men" (plural).

But let us go on to consider . . .

II. WHO THEY WERE.

Jude did not name them, but he described them as far as their relationship to God was concerned.

He did not need to know them personally (although maybe he did). But he could tell from what they taught that they were not the true people of God. And so he used two words to describe them:

- A. "Men . . . who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."
- B. "Ungodly men."

Let us look at these expressions, and make as sure as we can what they mean.

- A. "Men . . . who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."

The word "ordained" is probably a little strong, and perhaps misleading, when we consider the meaning of the word in the original. The word actually means

something which was written about previously. It probably means that the writers of Scripture had warned in their writings about the coming of false teachers. And instead of being like Jude described the saints in v. 21, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," they were headed for "this condemnation." Their doom was certain. Jude seems to be saying that when a person gets to the place spiritually that these men were, it is apparent that they are bound for hell, not for heaven. Only rarely do false teachers turn from their false teaching to the truth, especially when they have been guilty of the kind of false teaching which Jude was going to describe here.

Along this line think of those whom Jude mentioned in his Epistle: the fallen angels, the Devil, Can, Balaam, and Korah. And remember the preaching of Enoch against the men described in v. 15 of this Epistle.

But Peter had written about false teachers. See 2 Pet. 2, 3. Paul had written about false teachers. He had warned the Ephesian elders about false teachers when he spoke to them in Acts 20. The Lord Jesus warned of false teachers. The OT prophets spoke of false prophets. So plenty had been written about this very kind of a situation. Instead of being surprised when there is false teaching going on in the church, we ought to be surprised if there is none.

CF. ROM. 15:4;
EPA. 5:3 FOR
USES OF
προγράφω

It seems that this is what Jude was actually saying. Other passages speak of the foreordained judgment of God upon the wicked, but it does not seem that this is one of them.

But what else did Jude say about them? He called them . .

B. "Ungodly men."

This word, "ungodly," is a word which we need to know because Jude used it six times in this Epistle: here, four times in v. 15, and once in v. 18. What specifically does it mean?

An ungodly person is one who defiantly withholds from God the worship that is due Him, and instead, sets himself to wage war against God.

An ungodly person is a rebellious sinner. He does not simply ignore God; he hates God! He is out to destroy any and everything that has to do with God. There are

plenty of men like this in every generation. But notice, Jude was saying, and rightly, that these men who showed such a desire to get next to the people of God were not doing it because they loved the Lord, or His Word, or His people, but they actually are men who hate God, and hate Jesus Christ, and hate the Word of God, and have no use for the people of God. Oh, the subtlety of the Devil!

Listen to what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about false teachers. He spoke of . . .

. . . false apostles, deceitful workers,
transforming themselves
into the apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed
into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing
if his ministers also be transformed
as the messengers of righteousness;
whose end shall be according to their works
(2 Cor. 11:13-15).

But how could Jude say such things, so positively, about those men--assuming even that he did not know them personally?

It was because of . . .

III. WHAT THEY WERE TEACHING.

You could condense what they were teaching down to two main points. Here is the first one:

- A. They were "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness."

The NKJV and the NASB use the word, "licentiousness." There may be occasions when "lasciviousness" and "licentiousness" could be used synonymously, but I think that those who have worked on these two newer versions have wanted to convey to us what the word in the original word conveys, and that is, not that these false teachers were only encouraging sexual immorality, but they were using the grace of God as a license, as permission, as even sanction, for doing anything that the Bible speaks of as sin.

We need to bring in at this point one thing which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians. Listen to these words:

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;
only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,
but by love serve one another (Gal. 5:3).

Those false teachers were attacking, first of all, THE GOSPEL! The Gospel frees us from sin, but it does not free us to sin. We are delivered from the bondage of sin, but grace does not give us "license" to do whatever we want to do. The grace of God teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Tit. 2:12).

Christ

gave himself for us,
that he might redeem us from all iniquity,
and purify unto himself a peculiar people,
zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14).

And so any teacher who teaches license to sin, any sin, is perverting the grace of God. And he needs to be exposed and condemned as a false teacher.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to want, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for thy courts above.

God's grace delivers us from sin, and then God's grace makes us holy!

But note their other point of doctrine:

B. They were "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

It does not seem that Jude was speaking here about God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, but only about the Lord Jesus Christ. They were denying that our Lord Jesus Christ was the only Sovereign Lord, or lit. our Despot!

They were denying that we belong 100% to the Lord, and that He exercises absolute authority over our lives. They utterly reject that truth. They refuse to be submissive to His Word. They refuse to render obedience to Him. Their hearts have never been changed, and so they insist on having their own way.

Let me ask you a question: How many professing Christians do you know who live according to the teaching of those false teachers? And here is another question: WHERE DO YOU STAND WITH REGARD TO THE GRACE OF GOD, AND WITH REGARD

TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? He is sovereign whether you and I want Him to be, or not! But do you believe He is sovereign--sovereign as to whom He saves, and sovereign in the lives of His people? Do you fear the Lord? Are you fearful lest you do anything that is displeasing to Him? Is the truth you believe making you holy, or are you just like you have always been. This is where we need to examine ourselves as to whether or not we are really "in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5). How easy it is to speak of Jesus Christ as "Lord," and yet not pay any attention to what He wants us to be, and what He wants us to do. Make sure that He is your only Lord, and that you delight to do His will.

Concl: Let me point out as I close that we have two tests here by which you and I can test any doctrine that comes our way. They are:

- 1) What does it have to say about the grace of God? Does grace lead to holiness, or is grace taught as license to sin?
- 2) What does it have to say about the Lord Jesus Christ? Did He really purchase His people by His death on the Cross so that He owns us, and has every right to tell us how He wants us to live? And are you living His way, or your way?

— If you find that you fail these tests, I can only tell you in all honesty that you need to be saved. The proof that you know the Lord is not how you may have professed to accept Christ as your Saviour; the proof is in what has taken place since you made that profession. Make sure that you really do know Him as your Saviour.

For those of us who truly have the witness of the Spirit in our hearts, let me say that we need to exercise great care over our lives every day that we live, praying that the Lord will give us the grace (strength) to make sure that what we do, what we say, what we think, and what we are, all reflect the reality that Jesus Christ is our Saviour and that we delight to do His will, and therefore we want to be holy.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Jude 5-10

Intro: What we have in these verses is evidence that history repeats itself. It is like seeing the past in the present. What men have done in the past, they will do in the future, and it is very, very likely that they are doing those things on this very day! This is the message that Jude gave here. Men are so corrupt in their hearts that they do not learn from the past. They go on and on committing the same sins, and suffering the same punishment--and they will continue to do the same until the end of time.

Like Peter in 2 Peter 2, Jude mentioned:

- 1) Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2) The angels that sinned.

And, although Peter did not mention Michael, yet he did mention the good angels who refused to bring a railing accusation against the evil doers before the Lord even though they were in a higher position than the human sinners.

In v. 11, which goes beyond our text for today, Jude mentioned Balaam along with others, and Peter also had mentioned Balaam.

So we see the similarity in content between the two Epistles, Jude and 2 Peter, and we also see the similarities between their messages and ephases. And, in the case of Jude, these verses, and vv. 11-16 which follow, enlarge upon the twofold exposure that Jude made in v. 4. Both Peter and Jude certainly teach us that moral corruption and false teaching go hand in hand, and that the false teacher is characterized as one who has no fear of God in his heart.

But let us look at what Jude has written. We have four points in these six verses:

- I. REMINDERS FROM THE PAST (vv. 5-7).
- II. THE CONDUCT OF THE FALSE TEACHERS (v. 8).
- III. MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL, AND THE DEVIL, IN THEIR DISPUTE (v. 9).
- IV. THE CONTRAST WITH THE FALSE TEACHERS (v. 10).

Let us look at the first section.

- I. REMINDERS FROM THE PAST (Jude 5-7).

Let me say just a word about the importance of knowing what has gone on before you and I were here in this world. The study of history, secular or sacred, is very important for all of us. The person who is ignorant of history will go on making the same mistakes that have been made in the past--as well as not knowing the excellent examples of others.

Young people, do not try to avoid the study of history in school. It is one of the most valuable of courses that you can take. It will be a sad day indeed, if our schools ever stop teaching history.

But let me say a word at this point about Biblical history.

We may wonder at times why certain things are in the Bible. Here Jude has shown us that the explanation for the history of judgments in Scripture is so that we will learn, be warned, and seek God's help in avoiding what others have done to bring the judgment of God upon them. There is a real lesson for us to learn from the rebellion of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and God's judgment upon them. There is a real lesson for us to learn from what happened at Sodom and Gomorrah. There is a real lesson for us to learn from what the Bible tells us about the angels who sinned against the Lord. When we combine all three (and there are many, many other illustrations which Jude and Peter could have used), the testimony is overwhelming! We can thank the Lord that we have been exposed to these historical events as we have read our Bibles, or as somewhat has taught us these stories from the Bible. They are not very nice stories, but it is important that we know them or they would not be in our Bibles.

But let me point out another thing that Jude was emphasizing here (and Peter was actually doing the same thing). It is so easy for us to forget what we have known in the past! Our hearts are so inclined toward sin because our flesh is so corrupt and weak, that we can so easily put out of our minds the history which we have known and which could have served as a warning to keep us from sinning in the same way.

Note what Jude said at the beginning of v. 5: "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this." A teacher does not always teach new things. Sometimes he repeats things that he or others have taught before. The apostles did that. Faithful pastors will do that.

Luke, in writing the book of Acts, said by way of condemning what the men of Athens, and others who had come to Athens, spent their time in doing. Listen to Acts 17:21:

(For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

We all not only need to be taught the truth, but we need to be reminded of what we have been taught. That is why

we need to keep reading our Bibles even though we have read them over and over again. That is why we need to keep coming to Sunday School and church. Some of you may have missed something that was taught in Sunday School this morning because you were not here. Listen carefully whenever the Word is being taught. You might be inclined to say, "Oh, I've heard that before," and then start thinking about something else. But, if you are hearing something again that you have heard before, the Lord probably has a reason for it--and you had better listen carefully. Maybe it is something you have known in the past, but you have forgotten it, and God is graciously reminding you of it again because you need it to protect you.

Now let us notice the examples. There are three of them.

A. The Israelites in the wilderness (v. 5).

How many of you remember that story? Do you remember how the children of Israel were delivered from their bondage and slavery in Egypt? And do you remember why the Lord destroyed them, and how many He destroyed? (Explain.)

And why was it that He destroyed them? Jude says, and the book of Numbers, chapters 13 and 14, will tell us, that it was because they did not believe the Lord, they did not trust the Lord, when the spies came back with their discouraging report.

And so what did they do? They refused to go ahead, and they even wanted to kill Moses and their other leaders for taking them out of Egypt.

They fell under that awful judgment from God because they dared to rebellion against the authority of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

Lesson #1. Now Lesson #2:

B. The fallen angels (v. 6).

Peter mentioned this in his second Epistle. Cf. 2 Pet. 2:4:

For if God spared not the angels that sinned,
but cast them down to hell,
and delivered them into chains of darkness,
to be reserved unto judgment.

The Lord Jesus said of the Devil who was their leaders that "he . . . abode not in the truth" (John 8:44). And it is possible that Isa. 14:13, 14 tell us about

his rebellion against God. But this is about all that we have in Scripture about this event which took place before Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord.

But here is another example of rebellion. Did they get away with it? NO! They are, after all of the time covered by human history,
reserved in everlasting chains under darkness
unto the judgment of the great day.

Did their rebellion succeed? Absolutely not! And if angels could not get away with rebelling against God, do you think that you can, or anyone else can? Don't forget what Peter and Jude have taught us.

That is Lesson #2. Now for Lesson #3:

C. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7).

Do you remember this story? It is found in Genesis 18 and 19.

I used to teach Genesis at the Multnomah School of the Bible. I taught it for about ten years. And, you know, I always dreaded coming to those terrible chapters. I had young ladies in my classes, and I really did not like to get into that subject with them. But I always taught it. And, if I were to teach Genesis again, I would teach those chapters again although I still would find it very uncomfortable because it tells of those two cities which were taken over by the sin of homosexuality.

We have to talk about it. Paul talked about it in writing to the Roman church. It was a sin which was prevalent in his day. And he described it this way after he mentioned how it is the consequence of man's rebellion against God:

For this cause God gave them up
unto vile affections:
For even their women did change the natural use
into that which is against nature:
And likewise also the men,
leaving the natural use of the woman,
burned in their lust one toward another;
men with men working that which is unseemly,
and receiving in themselves that recompence
of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:26, 27).

The NKJV concludes that 27th verse like this: "And receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."

Do you suppose that was AIDS? They paid a price physically for their rebellion against God, but what was even worse, they had to pay an eternal price of judgment for their sin.

And the amazing thing is that our society today sanctions what God utterly condemned and judged long, long ago. But you see, people do not read the Bible, and they do not believe it even if they read it. But here is a solemn warning for us. Others may not pay attention to it, but let us not make that mistake!

Now let us notice Jude's second point in this text.

II. THE CONDUCT OF THE FALSE TEACHERS (Jude 8).

Paul called them "filthy dreamers." What does this tell us about them?

Well, if you remember how God communicated to people in past days, you will know that He did this sometimes by dreams. Take Joseph for an example. And so this expression would tell us that these false teachers claimed to have a new revelation from God, and their revelation would supersede anything that had been given before.

THIS WORD
IS NOT IN
THE ORIGI-
NAL GK, BUT
WAS ADDED
TO DESCRIBE
BOTH THE MEN
AND THEIR
DREAMS.

But, from what they taught, their dreams were "filthy," meaning that they were intemperate, encouraging excess and completely lacking in self-control. Jude told us in v. 4 that they were "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." There were no absolutes with these teachers. If you wanted to do something that the Bible condemns as sin, they would encourage you to go ahead. They would not put people under any moral restraints at all. This is the kind of men they were, and this was the nature of their teaching.

But Jude described them in three ways:

- A. They "defile the flesh." Your flesh and mine are defiled when our sins are like Isaiah said, "scarlet." They are stained with a stain which no man can remove. No counselor can counsel them away.
- B. They "despise dominion." They set aside, disregard, all authority. There is no submission to God. Jude said that that they were "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." But when people disregard God and set His authority aside, they do the same with parents, with teachers, with police officers, with the law, and with the government.

Doesn't it sound like Jude was talking about what is going on in the United States of America?

But this is not all.

- C. They "speak evil of dignities," of superior powers, which God intends for us to be submissive to, and to obey.

So they not only despise the authorities in their hearts, and in their behavior, but they do not hesitate to speak out openly in opposition to them. We have had an example of that in what has taken place this week in the university for hearing impaired students in Washington, D. C.

But let us go on.

III. MICHAEL AND THE DEVIL (Jude 9).

We do not have any record of this in Scripture, but it was given to Jude to tell us about this.

We cannot say exactly what it means. We know that when Moses died, the Lord buried him. Cf. Deut. 34:6. And we know also that the Israelites could not find his body, nor his burial place. Evidently this was so unusual and God had such a good reason for doing what He did, that the Devil took issue with Him over this.

"A RAILING
(REVILING)
ACCUSATION"
IS ONE IN
WHICH A
PERSON'S NAME
IS BLASPHEMED,
SLANDERED.

Now Michael is "the archangel," the first or highest angel. Among the angels as they are now, he is the highest authority. But it may not always have been that way. It is possible that before the Devil fell by his rebellion against God, that he was higher. That seems to be implied by the emphasis that Jude was making here. And so the point is that even though the Devil was fallen from his original place, Michael, who is now the chief, would not "bring against" the Devil "a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Michael refused to set aside the place that the Lord had originally given to Lucifer, the Devil.

We often feel justified in condemning leaders because we do not agree with them, or because they may be doing something that is evil. Leaders may be evil, but we are not to speak evil of them. Cf. Tit. 3:1, 2.

This is actually Lesson #4 from history.

But what about those false teachers?

IV. THE CONTRAST WITH THE FALSE TEACHERS (Jude 10).

Even though they profess to be teachers, they are really ignorant of the things they claim to know, and by what they do know they corrupt themselves. And so they are destined for the judgment of God also. That judgment may not come immediately, but we can be sure that it will eventually come without any question.

No man is going to get away with rebelling against God, knowingly or unknowingly. They may sound very convincing, but only the wrath of God is ahead of them.

Concl: We are not finished with what Jude had to say about those false teachers. He continued on down through v. 16. And we will come to that, the Lord willing, next Sunday. But what are we to learn from what we have seen so far?

Let me mention three things in conclusion.

First, how can we escape the emphasis that we need to know our Bibles? We need to read it, and we need to re-read it. We need to hear it taught. We need to memorize it. And we need to remember what we know. We can be thankful for our churches where we can hear the Word repeated over and over. And we can be thankful that the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit, not only to teach us, but also to keep us reminded of what we have been taught.

Secondly, we need to obey the Word of God. If we live according to the Word of God, we will never be sorry. But if we depart from the Word, we will always get ourselves into trouble. Let us pray that we will be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22). James says that if we hear it, but do not obey it, we are only deceiving ourselves. We do not deceive God.

Thirdly, let us believe the warnings of Scripture. They are there to warn us. The sinning that is recorded in Scripture is there to serve as a warning to us. Paul called them admonitions, which in the Greek means something that is to be put in our minds.

As I have said, there are some chapters in the Bible that are hard to teach because they speak of very distasteful things. But we need to know them, and we cannot ignore them without facing terrible consequences. May the Lord enable each of us to be faithful to Him and to His Word.

GOD AGAINST THE UNGODLY

Jude 11-16

Intro: In vv. 4-16 Jude was dealing with the false teachers.

In v. 4 he mentioned their two basic errors, and these were very basic to the Christian life:

- 1) The meaning of the grace of God.
- 2) The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in the lives of His people.

In the passage we had last Sunday, vv. 5-10, Jude was mainly concerned about the corrupt lives which the false teachers were living. NOW, as we come today to vv. 11-16, it seems that Jude was primarily concerned about their teaching, AND the fact that it not only failed to produce what it promised, but it would have a most disastrous effect upon all who followed their teaching.

The teaching of the grace of God results in holiness of life; any departure from the grace of God cannot produce holy people. The teaching of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ in the lives of His people produces holiness of life; the denial of that Lordship can only lead to greater and greater sin. These are the issues and so we can see the reason for the great concern that Jude showed in this Epistle.

In our text for today we have, first of all,

I. THREE OLD TESTAMENT COMPARISONS (Jude 11).

Again we see the importance of knowing the OT. If you do not know these stories, take the time to look them up in the OT and familiarize yourself with them. The three men Jude referred to are Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Each one represents something bad in the sight of God, and they are things which can be found in every generation. They are present in our generation.

A. "The way of Cain."

What was "the way of Cain"?

"The way of Cain" is seen in Gen. 4 as a way of approaching God. He approached God without an animal sacrifice, and without the shedding of blood. Translated into NT terms this means that Cain believed it was possible to approach God without going through Christ. The OT sacrifices pointed to Christ. And there have always been those who have felt that Christ is not really necessary when it comes to pleasing God. Cain's "way" was not by grace, but by works. Cain did not believe that sin had really ruined man so that his condition before God was hopeless. He was one of

those who believed that you could come your own way,
and that that would be acceptable with God.

But was it sufficient?

Genesis 4 answers, "No!" Cain was rejected; Abel was accepted. Why? Because Abel was better than Cain. Again, "NO!" It was because Abel brought an animal sacrifice, and God had respect for his offering. The result was that Cain killed Abel, and the followers of Cain have been seeking to do away with the doctrine of the grace of God ever since.

The Apostle John wrote about Cain in 1 John 3:12

. . . who was of that wicked one,
and slew his brother.
And wherefore shew he him?
Because his own works were evil,
and his brother's righteous.

It is "evil" to try to approach God by your own works.
It is "evil" to try to approach God apart from Christ.

Let us look at the second example:

B. Balaam.

What was "the error of Balaam"? Do you remember this story from Numbers 22-24?

I hope you will read it this afternoon if you have forgotten it, or if you have never known it. You will find the the King of Moab, who feared the Israelites, sent for Balaam to get him to curse the children of Israel. But the Lord refused to let him do it. Three times he tried, and three times he was restrained by the Lord.

But Balaam had another plan.

Joshua 31:16 us about the women of Midian who . . .
caused the children of Israel,
through the counsel of Balaam,
to commit trespass against the Lord
in the matter of Peor,
and there was a plague among the congregation
of the Lord.

Balaam got the women of Israel to tempt the men of Israel to worship Baal, and consequently they were judged by the Lord for this sin. And why did Balaam do it? Jude said that it was "for reward." He did it because he got paid for doing it.

See that story in Numbers 25:1-9. Adultery led to idolatry, and the idolatry led to the death of 24,000 Israelites.

False teachers are always interested in money, in getting paid for what they do, but there was an even greater problem here. Balaam got the people to bring judgment upon themselves by their sin even after God had so wonderfully preserved them. All of that together was "the error of Balaam." This was a perversion of God's grace, perhaps, as one writer has suggested, by making them feel so secure in their relationship with God that they could do anything, and God would still not forsake them. (See Michael Green's commentary on Jude, p. 187.)

The third example:

C. Core, or as it is spelled in the OT, Korah.

What was the gainsaying of Korah? Do you know this story?

It is found in Numbers 16.

What did Korah do? He and Dathan and Abiram, and a man named, On, led 250 of the outstanding princes of Israel in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, the divinely appointed leaders of Israel. They were men who despised authority.

But remember this: If men despise human authority which God has appointed, they are actually despising and rebelling against GOD! And this fits in with the second thing that Jude said about those false teachers in Jude 4. They were "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

What happened to each of these men, and in the case of the last two, those who went along with them. THEY ALL FELL UNDER THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. That is the point that Jude was making. Cainism, and Balaamism, and Korahism may take different names, but they are to be found in every generation, and "woe unto them," and to all who follow them, no matter when or how the false teaching may reappear.

But there is a second point that Jude made:

II. FIVE DESCRIPTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS (Jude 12, 13).

Jude wanted to be very sure that every reader understood what those false teachers actually were.

Let me give you just a brief explanation of each one.

- A. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear" (v. 12a).

It is very likely that the word "spots" should be hidden rocks. These false teachers were a threat to the believers like hidden rocks would be a threat to a ship at sea. They were down where they could not be seen, but they were sure to cause a shipwreck. They would enter into the sacred time of the love feasts, brazenly "feeding themselves," but having no fear of God in their hearts.

- B. "Clouds are they without water, carried about of winds" (v. 12m).

We all know what it is to have clouds cover the sun, giving a promise of refreshing and needed rain, only to be blown away by the winds.

The false teachers were like that. They made great promises of blessing, but they never produced what they promised. And they were as unstable as clouds blown by the winds.

- C. "Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (v. 12b).

The Lord Jesus one said that we can know what men are, and who they are, by their fruits. And He also said that a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit. See Matt. 7:15-20. He also said in that same passage,

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

That is what Jude was saying. They might appear to have fruit, but it withers before it ripens, and so they are without any real fruit. The reason: they are spiritually dead, and dead the second time in the sense that they will be uprooted—cast into the fires of hell!

- D. "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (v. 13a).

"Shame" is plural in the Greek text: shames! They are untamed, uncontrolled, like the waves of the sea, giving expression to that which is their own shame and disgrace. Jude was probably thinking of Isa. 57:20.

- E. "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of

darkness for ever" (v. 13b).

Jude may be referring here to shooting stars, which go down in a blaze of glory, only to be lost in the darkness of the night. The false teachers claim to have the light, but they are messengers of the night and of the darkness "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." They have a reserved place in hell.

All of this is very picturesque language, and give a clear picture of what the false teachers were, and what false teachers always are, regardless of how they may appear to us.

But then Jude referred to . . .

III. THE PREACHING OF ENOCH (Jude 14, 15).

We do not have to look to the apocalyptic literature, and to a book, or books, supposedly traceable to Enoch, for this quotation. The Spirit of God was perfectly capable of making known to Jude that Enoch was a preacher, and that this is what he preached. I am satisfied with that explanation, and I hope you are.

Enoch, although we are not told this in Genesis, was a prophet of God. And this was the substance of his preaching, preaching which he did prior to the flood. He believed that the Lord was coming with His saints, and that He was coming to judge "the ungodly."

Do you remember our definition of "ungodly" when we came to it in v. 4? The word is used six times in this Epistle. It means a person who defiantly withholds from God the worship that is due Him, and instead, sets himself to wage war against God.

Those who follow "the way of Cain," and who run "greedily after the error of Balaam for reward," and who gainsay the Lord, contradicting Him, opposing His appointments, as Korah did, are "ungodly men." They do not honor God; they only try to make you think that they do. They are not interested in God, nor are they interested in you. They are only interested in themselves. You do not become godly by following their teaching; you will become ungodly and share the same dreadful fate that is theirs.

This kind of preaching would not have made Enoch a popular preacher in his day, and it is not popular preaching today. But it is needed preaching. The warnings which Jude sounded are sorely needed today.

Finally, we come to . . .

IV. JUDE'S SUMMATION CONCERNING THE FALSE TEACHERS (Jude 16).

They are discontented, and sow discord among the saints. They walk according to the flesh, and know nothing of walking in the Holy Spirit. They are great talkers, but not "walkers." They are men-pleasers, not God-pleasers. They glorify themselves; they do not glorify God.

How important it is for us not to be deceived by the good impression that men try to make. We need to listen, first and foremost, to what they teach about salvation, and about our Lord Jesus Christ. If they are wrong there, they cannot be trusted as men who can teach us, or as men who can lead us.

Concl: Does the truth mean that much to you? Do you think that doctrine is important? What do you understand about the grace of God? If I were to ask you how a person can become a Christian, what would you say? Could you tell me? Are you trusting in Christ? Is there evidence in your life that the Lord has saved you, that you are a new creature? What is your purpose in life? Is it to please God, or do you want to do what you want to do?

The answers that you give to these questions will show where you are in your relationship with the Lord.

As we come to the last nine verses of this important Epistle, we will see what Jude said that we need to remember, and what we need to be doing. Let me ask you to read those verses over and over like they were written especially for you--because they were! They are just as much for you and for me as though Jude had addressed this Epistle to the Trinity Bible Church in Portland, Oregon. Read it. Believe it. And make sure that, by the grace of God, you are doing all that you need to be doing in order that your life may be true to the Lord, true to His Word, true to His grace, in these days when there is so much going on in the Name of the Lord that does not have the slightest justification from the Word. In fact, we are seeing many things going on today with the apparent approval of those who are recognized as leaders, things which are strongly condemned in the Word of God. Know what the truth is, and then live according to the truth.

GOD IS AGAINST THE UNGODLY. LET US NOT BE ON THEIR SIDE, BUT ON HIS!

THE APOSTLES VS. THE MOCKERS

Jude 17-19

Intro: One thing is certain from all of the prophetic utterances of the NT: They do not paint a good picture of conditions in the last days, or as Jude called them ere, "the last time." It would be a time of increasing evil in the world, and a time in which the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ would be continually under attack. There might not always be violence and physical persecution, but the truths which are precious to Christians would be continually under attack.

"The last days," of course, are the days that we have been in since the Lord Jesus returned to heaven. But, as we move on in "the last days," as we have in our generation, we can expect an increasing evidence of the very things that Jude spoke of in this epistle--and of the things which Peter and Paul, especially, spoke of in their epistles.

How good the Lord has been to give us these warnings so that we would not be under any misconception as to what we can expect either from the world, or of conditions within the Church itself.

These warnings have been contained, in addition to the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, in . . .

I. THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES (Jude 17).

When I began our present study in Jude with you, I mentioned two possibilities as far as Jude was concerned. One was that he was a half-brother of our Lord. The other, that he was an apostle by the name of Judas (not Iscariot, but the one who had a brother named James).

The words here may be in favor of the idea that he was not an apostle because of the way he mentioned the apostles. He spoke of them as though he were not one of them. Contrast this with what Peter said along the same line in 2 Pet. 3:1b, 2:

. . . I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the Holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.

However, whatever may have been the truth about the identity of Jude, he was emphasizing here the importance of "the words . . . of the apostles"! As many have said before me, the authority of the NT rests upon the authority of the apostles. All of the books of the NT

were either written by an apostle, or by those who worked closely with an apostle. As Paul said about the Church, the body of Christ, in Eph. 2:20, that it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, so it is to be expected that the authoritative Book of the Church would be given to us by the apostles. So Jude was referring to the books of the NT which even then had not all been written. But they are the books containing the words which we need to know. And, since those books were written by "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," they are just as authoritative as they would have been if the Lord Jesus Christ has actually written every book of the NT. In fact, we can say that, as far as their teaching is concerned, they would not have been one bit different if our Lord had written them. They are His words. And they are His words because, as Peter has told us, "men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21b).

What words was Jude referring to?

They are words like Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-31 and 1 Tim. 4:1-3 and 2 Tim. 3:13 and 4:3, 4 and Titus 1:9-11 and 2 Pet. 2. And there are others.

What were those believers in that day to do with "the words" of those apostles? Here, Michael Green has said, is the first imperative of Jude's epistle: "REMEMBER." And then Mr. Green went on to say this:

Forgetfulness of the teaching and warnings of God in Scripture is a major cause of spiritual deterioration (pp. 194, 195).

It would be important for us to know the Scriptures even if there were no false teachers around. But they are all around us, and they will try to enter in among us. Therefore, this makes it urgently imperative that we know the Word of God. Because, as I have said many times, if we do not know the truth, how can we possibly recognize error when we hear it.

No Christian should have any greater priority in his life than that of becoming as thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures as he can. We must never stop reading the Word. We must never stop studying the Word. And it is a good idea even to memorize the Word. And we must never allow ourselves to forget what we have been taught. No teaching we will ever hear about God, or about the truth, will ever replace what we have been taught. The Word of God stands! Never forsake its teaching. If you do, you will only do it at the peril of your own soul. False teaching always leads into sin.

I hope that if the Lord tarries until after I am gone that you will never forget what I have been telling you this morning. Fill your mind and your heart and your whole life with the Word of God. It will be the greatest joy you can have, and it will give you the greatest protection against all the attacks of the Enemy that will come your way.

But now let us go on to talk about . . .

II. THE MOCKERS (Jude 18, 19).

A. What is a mocker?

The dictionary defines a mocker as one who treats anything with scorn or contempt. He ridicules and deceives and defies. He sneers and he tries to get everybody to laugh at the thing that he is mocking.

Now when you speak of one who mocks God, or Jesus Christ, or the Church, or the Bible and what it teaches, you see you have one who treats the truth with contempt. He scorns it, and tries to get everyone else to do the same. He ridicules those who believe the truth. He may not start out this way, but it is not long before you can see what he is up to.

The mocker will try to make you look foolish if you believe the Bible. He may not only ridicule the teaching that salvation is only through Christ, but he will probably deny even the need for salvation. He will scoff at your ideas, gotten from the Word, concerning sin. Nothing is sacred to the mocker.

The best illustration of a mocker is to be seen in what all kinds of people did at the time of our Lord's crucifixion. And there are many, many other lesser examples to be seen throughout the Word of God, in both the OT and the NT.

But let us look at another way in which a mocker can be identified.

B. How does he live?

Jude said that they "walk after their own ungodly lusts."

Now remember that often they come along as Bible teachers. They ridicule what you believe, but they have their own doctrines they want you to believe--probably some perversion of the teaching of Scripture.

But the real test of any teaching, including the teaching of the Word of God, is this: What does it do in the lives of those who believe it?

Dr. Lloyd-Jones, who is now in heaven, but who was the pastor of the Westminster Chapel in London for about 30 years, addressed this subject in his book of The Sermon on the Mount. He mentioned a prominent Law Minister from the country of India, who was a leader of the out-castes in India. He became interested in Buddhism as a possibility for the people he was leading. And this is what he was interested in:

I want to find if it is alive. Has it something to give to these masses of my fellow out-castes? Has it dynamic in it? Is it something that can uplift people? (See Vol. I, p. 19.)

Now, whether a teacher wants to admit it or not, every man's teaching is either confirmed or denied by his own life. The powerful thing about the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ was the fact that you could see in His life what He was talking about. The One Who most clearly demonstrated the Sermon on the Mount was our Lord Himself.

Paul told Timothy,

But thou hast fully known my doctrine,
manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering,
charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions . . .
(2 Tim. 3:10, 11a).

He told Timothy to "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation (manner of life), in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12).

What can you say about anyone who mocks the Bible, or who mocks the Lord Jesus Christ? Jude said it here in v. 18b, they "walk after their own ungodly lusts."

Do you remember that word "ungodly" from vv. 4 and 15? Do you remember what it means? An "ungodly" person is a person who, though he may pose as a teacher of the things of God, he is actually anti-God. He does not want to please God by doing what God wants him to do; he is governed by his own anti-God lusts. He is really looking out for #1--not God, AND NOT YOU! He is ruining his own life, and he will ruin yours, too, if you let him. As we will see in a moment, he is on his way to hell, and he wants to take you with him. He may not know that, but, if he ridicules the Bible and God and Christ and the people of God, there is no other place that he can possibly go. There are only

two places, you know: heaven and hell. He may think he is going to heaven, but he is not if he is not in complete harmony with the Word of God.

False teachers always like to side-step this matter of their personal lives. **REMEMBER THIS: ALWAYS BEWARE OF THE PREACHER OR THE POLITICIAN OR ANYONE ELSE WHO SAYS THAT HIS PUBLIC LIFE IS ONE THING, BUT HIS PERSONAL LIFE IS ANOTHER—OR THAT HIS PERSONAL LIFE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS PUBLIC LIFE. IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH A PERSON'S PUBLIC LIFE. IF A MAN IS DIFFERENT IN PRIVATE FROM WHAT HE IS IN PUBLIC HE IS NOTHING BUT A HYPOCRITE!**

But Jude has given us one more point about these mockers that are so plentiful and so dangerous:

III. THE EMPHASIS AND NATURE OF THOSE WHO MOCK (Jude 19).

Jude gives us three statements that a mocker would never tell us, nor are we inclined to notice the first, nor will we be inclined to recognize the second and the third (which are related to each other).

The first thing Jude said about them here is:

A. Their emphasis: They "separate themselves."

Now a Christian is to be a person who is separated—separated from the world. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. He is to be separated from sin. His life is to be different because he is a Christian. He does not go on living like he used to live. And, if a person professes to be a Christian, but is not changed in his life, we can only assume that he is not really a Christian. Paul said that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or, lit., it is a new creation.

So what is wrong about this expression where Jude said that these mockers "separate themselves"? What is wrong with that?

Well, he means that they separate themselves from those who are separated from the world. Or, to state it another way, they separate themselves from the true people of God. They separate themselves from the Church. They have something better. And the end of result of their teaching is that they are leading people back into the world out of which they have come!

What do you think about that? His teaching may use

some of the language of Scripture, but actually it is humanistic teaching. It is centered in man, not in God. It exalts man, not God. It is dependent upon man's power, not God's. They do not exalt that which is holy, but that which is human.

That is the category into which a lot of teaching in our churches needs to be classed today. We are like the Lord said about Peter: he did not understand the things of God, but only the things of men. The Bible points us to God and to Christ, not to ourselves. The Bible encourages us to trust the Lord, not ourselves. The Bible teaches us to glory in the Lord, not in ourselves. Be careful of the man who wants to separate himself from the historic teaching of Scripture which has been the message of the Church from the time it first began.

B. Their nature: "sensual, having not the Spirit."

Much has been written about these two words, but let me give you briefly what I believe they teach.

The word "sensual" here is the same word that is translated "natural" in 1 Cor. 2:14. Do you remember that verse? It goes like this:

But the natural man receiveth not
the things of the Spirit of God:
for they are foolishness unto him:
neither can he know them,
because they are spiritually discerned.

What was Jude saying about these "ungodly" mockers who were claiming to be teachers?

He was saying that they were not saved. No man can be a Christian and mock God, or Christ, or the Bible, or the people of God. And if they are not saved, they do not have the Spirit of God. And if they do not have the Spirit of God, then, of course, the things of God will be foolishness to him, and he will do everything he can to get rid of them.

Was Jude saying that it is possible that a person who claims to be a Christian teacher may not even be a Christian? That is exactly what he was saying. That is what the Apostles said, and you and I had better never forget it!

Concl: You see, we are not to pay attention to what a man claims to be--at least that is not the first thing. Listen to what he is saying about the Bible. Does he teach

what the Bible teaches. What is he saying about God? About Christ? About man? About sin? About salvation? Look at his life. Does he live like the Bible tells us a child of God will live? Is he out to please God, or himself? Is he concerned about the will of God, or does he have his own program? Does he really want to help you, or is he after your influence, or your money?

Be very careful when you have trouble trying to figure out what a man is teaching. And be careful when you are more impressed by the man than you are with what he has to say. Oh, may the Lord spare us from being so superficial. We are naive when it comes to the truth. Doctrine itself is being ridiculed today in many churches, and consequently many of the Lord's people are an easy catch for the mocker who comes along with his smooth words and his friendly manner, but whose heart has never been changed, and whose message, while using some Scripture here and there, is not really of God.

THE SAINTS' GREATEST NEED
Part I

KEPT AND KEEPING
Jude 20-23

Text: "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21a).

Intro: We come in the 17th verse of this epistle to the practical section. In the 3rd verse of this letter Jude had expressed to them his purpose in writing to them, but it was not given there as an imperative, but simply as a statement of his purpose. (Read.) But to "remember" was the first specific thing that he told them to do by way of a commandment.

In the 20th verse Jude became intensely and specifically practical. (Read.)

I want to point out for you as we begin the relationship of these statements to each other.

There are four statements in these two verses. (Read again.)

Three out of the four are participles--verbs ending with i-n-g. One is stated as a command. Most school-age children would be able to point out the difference.

The difference means this: The main command is in the first part of v. 21. All of the others actually tell what is involved in keeping ourselves in the love of God. In order to keep ourselves in the love of God (with what that that means as we shall see this morning, the Lord willing)--in order to keep ourselves in the love of God it will also be necessary for us to be:

- 1) "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith,"
- 2) "Praying in the Holy Spirit," and
- 3) "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

These are all related to each other. We cannot ignore any of them without leaving out a very vital part of what Jude was saying. We need them all.

Now are there are two things that I would like to say about these four statements:

- 1) Obeying these is what is involved in contending for the faith. No child of God can really be contending for the faith who is not doing these four things.
- 2) These four things constitute the major things that go to make up a strong, growing, influential life for the true child of God. I would add to that the emphasis that is made in vv. 22, 23.

And so, because of the importance of these statements, I am going to spend a Sunday on each one. I just cannot find it in my heart to hurry over them in a single service. These are what you and I desperately need in our lives, living in days like we are living in now--what Jude even then called, "the last time" (v. 18). And I want you to think of verses 20-23 as expressing for us THE SAINTS' GREATEST NEED.

You know, I suppose that every pastor has heard some person say at some time or another, especially as he or she was announcing his departure from the church, "I am leaving because my needs are not being met."

I have always found that the people who say that really don't have the slightest idea what their needs are. It might be a young lady who has been looking unsuccessfully for a husband, or vice versa with a young man. Or parents who are looking for a church who will take over the spiritual training of their children. Or someone who is more interested in a lot of music and entertaining features than they are interested in teaching. Or it could be many other things. Maybe a person has a particular project he is interested in getting the church involved in, such as some political project. It could be any number of things. But these are people who have never known, or else they have forgotten, what their real needs are as a Christian.

When anybody can show me that those other things are the work of the church, then I will be willing to change. But until then, I would rather stand by what Paul and Peter and John and Jude have taught us in their epistles concerning the need of believers in every generation. And that is what I intend to do from this epistle of Jude in the next four or five Sundays. I want to point out for you, and for myself, what our greatest need is as the people of God living in 1988. I hope you will listen carefully. Examine your own heart in the light of the Word of God, and I feel sure that the Spirit of God will show you that Jude is just as up-to-date for us as he was for the people of God in his day--2,000 years ago!

And so this morning let us consider together the imperative of vv. 20 and 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

I. THE MEANING OF THE COMMAND.

This is not the first time that Jude has used this verb, keep. It is actually the 5th time. (And by the way, the word "keep" in v. 24 is a different word from the word Jude used here in v. 21, although there is some similarity in the words. But we will discuss that when we come to v. 20.)

Τηρέω

The five times that Jude used this particular word are in:

- 1) V. 1, translated "preserved."
- 2) Twice in v. 6, the second time translated "reserved."
- 3) V. 13, where it is also translated "reserved."
- 4) V. 21--our text.

Actually the only two that we need to be concerned about in connection with our text are those in vv. 1 and the first one in v. 6.

The first verse teaches the great doctrine of eternal salvation. All who are truly saved are kept in and by Christ Jesus! No one can pluck us out of His hand, nor out of the Father's hand. See John 10:28-30. We have double security.

But we read in v. 6 about "the angels" who "kept not their first estate," and so they are now kept "in everlasting chains" awaiting "the judgment of the great day."

And in our text this morning we have the command addressed to each believer: "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

Therefore, we can say that we are "kept," but we are also to be keeping ourselves. Does this mean that the Lord has done, and is doing, His part, but that what He does is not enough for our salvation unless we also keep ourselves?

Some may believe that, but that is clearly not the teaching of Scripture.

The keeping power of Christ is sufficient to get you and me to heaven. But that does not mean that we can be as careless as we want to about our lives. That is not the way a true Christian will live. A true Christian knows that he bears a great responsibility under God for the way he lives from day to day. The Bible teaches the sovereignty of God in salvation, but it also teaches our responsibility--and yet our responsibility can only be met by the enabling grace of God. Nevertheless, the Bible does address many commands in the NT to us! And let us not forget that!

But more about the meaning.

ROBERTSON,
VI, 194.

AORIST
IMPERA-
TIVE.

Jude stated this word "keep" in a tense which suggested urgency! He meant that they were not make no delay in doing this. It could not be postponed another day. This was where they were to be living, "in the love of God."

Keeping meant that they were to keep watch, to stand guard. It suggested that there was an imminent danger confronting them. Do you know what it was? It was the

possibility of getting OUT of the love of God.

But there is another part to that verb "keep" which helps us to understand what Jude was talking about, and how it is that we get out of the love of God. The verb "keep" also, when used as it is in this verse, means that there is some practical things which need to be done. In other words, certain things need to be done very regularly and with the greatest care.

Now "the love of God" can mean two things:

- 1) It can mean God's love for us.
- 2) It can mean our love for God.

What does it mean here? It means both! We were brought into the love of God when we were saved. We experienced the many blessings that God gives to His people when they are saved. We were showered with these blessings which were and continue to be the expression of His love. He loved us, and we love Him in return. He loved first, and our love is our response to His love.

But now here is the crucial question: How do we stay in that place of blessing? Or, to state it another way, How do we continue to show the Lord that we love Him?

The Lord answered that question the first time He gave that greatest of all commandments. Cf. Deut. 6. The way we show our love for God, the way we continue in His love, continue to experience His blessings from day to day, is BY OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD!

This is what Moses sought to impress upon the Israelites the last time He spoke to them. And this is what the Lord spoke about to His disciples the last time He spoke to them before He died on the Cross. Cf. John 14:21, 23; 15:9-11. See also Paul's word in 1 Cor. 7:19,

Circumcision is nothing,
and uncircumcision is nothing,
but the keeping of the ~~commandments~~ of God.

William Kelly in his commentary on Jude defined God's love as the character of God in action (p. 151). I like that. What better thing can we do than to keep ourselves in the place of blessing, where we will continue to be the recipients of the outpouring of God's love. It is God's nature to bless, but both the OT and the NT teach us that He does not bless a disobedient people.

What blessings does He give us? He gives us strength for each day, each task, each trial. He gives us wisdom and guidance. He protects us from sin and from things that threaten our souls. So you can really see that in ful-

filling this responsibility to God we are actually manifesting our trust in God to do for us as He has promised. We can never fall out of salvation, but we can certainly fall out of fellowship with the Lord.

Thus, the bottom line reads, so to speak: THE GREATEST NEED WE HAVE IS TO KEEP OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD STRONG THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD. AND THE GREATEST THREAT WE FACE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD WILL GROW COLD. When our love does grow cold, the Lord does not stop loving us, but we lose the consciousness of that love, and the manifestation of that love in our lives which gives us such peace and joy and fruitfulness.

Now this brings me to a final point:

II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS STATEMENT TO THE MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE.

What I am going to say now relates not only to this one statement we have been discussing, but to all of these practical exhortations. I mentioned it briefly at the beginning. What connection do they have with Jude's purpose for the believers who first received this epistle?

It is this, and it is a very important connection: YOU CANNOT REALLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH IF YOU ARE NOT LIVING IN OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD. All of the fine arguments you and I might present for the Bible as the Word of God, or for the Deity of Christ, or any other great doctrine of the faith, will have no power to influence or change lives unless our lives are an example of the faith that we believe and proclaim.

The strongest message we can proclaim for the truth of the Word of God is through an obedient, godly life. The person who lives in the love of God, is the person whose very life is a proof not only of the existence of God, but that God is a God of love, a God Who is deserving of our love, our obedience, our complete trust.

Concl: Will you take this command as a personal command to you this morning? We will have our hands full making sure that this is where we are, not only for today, but for every day we live.

How much do you love the Lord? I'll tell you how much you do. And the same applies to me. We only love the Lord to the extent that we are obedient to Him. To love Him with our whole heart and soul and strength and mind means that we want to please and obey Him more than we want anything else in our lives. Cf. 1 John 4:3, "For this is the love of God . . ."

THE SAINTS' GREATEST NEED

Part II

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE

Jude 20-23

Text: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, . . ."

Intro: My subject for this Sunday, combined with my subject last Sunday, and my subject for the following three Sundays, together make up what we should think of as our greatest need as the people of God.

If you were here last Sunday, you will remember (I hope) that we have in vv. 20, 21 one main verb and three participles.

The main verb is, found at the beginning of v. 21: "Keep."

The participles are: "Building up . . . praying . . . looking."

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" means that we are to live in such a way that we stay where the Lord's love will be manifested in the greatest way in our lives--and that mean living in obedience to God's Word. There is no danger that God will ever stop loving His own children, but the experience of that love, the enjoyment of that love, is reserved for those who seek to do the things that are pleasing in God's sight. And the Lord has not left us in the dark as to what that means: it means obedience, loving, faithful, obedience to the Word of God.

It is obedience that gives joy and vitality and blessing to us in our relationship with God. And how thankful we can be for those words which Paul wrote to the Philippian church, in Phil. 2:13,

For it is God which worketh in you
both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

If you are struggling in your obedience, or if you have been careless about your obedience, go to the Lord and pray earnestly that He will give you the desire, the will, to be obedient, and then that He will give you the wisdom and the strength to do what the Word of God says. There is no other way to be happy in the Lord.

To be obedient is our greatest need. And so, "keep yourselves in the love of God."

Now there are several things which go into that. If we are going to "keep ourselves in the love of God," we must be

1) "building up" ourselves "on" our "most holy faith,"

- 2) "praying in the Holy Spirit,"
- 3) "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Vv. 22, 23 need to be included also, but we are going to concentrate, first of all, on vv. 20, 21 because they really belong together.

Today we want to consider the first part of v. 20: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith."

First of all let me make . . .

I. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I am thinking now about our text. There are certain things about it that we need to notice.

The first is:

- A. It comes first, ahead of all of these statements. This is where Jude began.

Since the writers of Scripture were very orderly, this means that this ought to be our first concern. If we do not begin here, there is no possibility that we can go any farther. If we are going to keep ourselves in the love of God, this is the starting-point. If we want to enter upon a life of fellowship with the Lord, this is the place to begin.

- B. This is something for which we are responsible.

Now when I say that I do not mean that it depends upon us. I do not mean that we can do this without the help and blessing of the Lord. But I am saying that the Word of God here is addressed to us, and it is to be of special concern to us that we are building up ourselves in our most holy faith. There are things for us to do. If we do not do them, we are the losers.

And this leads me to the third general observation.

- C. This is a command in which our attention is directed toward ourselves. Jude was not telling us here what we are to do for others. We certainly ought to be concerned that others are doing it, too, but the emphasis is upon us! No one else can do this for us (and when I say that I am talking about other Christians). Others may contribute to my being built up, but this is one place where I need to be concerned about myself first.

One mistake we often make in the Christian life is that we are concerned about our husband or wife, or about our children, or about our brothers and sisters, or about some dear relative or friend, and we get careless about ourselves. Jude said, "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Don't miss that emphasis!

The last general observation I want to make is this:

D. This is a continuous, never-ending task.

We never get to the place where we do not need to be concerned about building ourselves up on our most holy faith. We must be building, and building, and building, and building!

Now I have pointed these four things out without telling you what it means to build ourselves up on our most holy faith, but I think that you will see the application as we come now to discuss what our text means.

And I might add this: All four of these general observations are important when we come to consider all of the other statements which Jude made here. So keep them where you can refer to them as we go through vv. 20, 21.

But now let us look at the text, and the first part of the text suggests . . .

II. A SIGNIFICANT CONTRAST: "But ye, beloved."

Jude had been speaking about those mockers, those enemies of all that is righteous and holy and good. He was talking about religious teachers who set themselves apart, who were unregenerate, and, consequently, who did not have the Holy Spirit.

Jude spoke very tenderly here, as he did in v. 3: "Beloved." He loved them because they were the people of God. And he wanted them to know that a child of God does not live like people live who are without Christ. And the same thing applies today. We are the people of God, and therefore our lives are different; they must be different. Every Christian should know this, and never forget it. When we start to live like people live who do not know the Lord, we are in trouble.

But not for the verse. Look, first of all, at the first part of our text:

III. "BUILDING UP YOURSELVES."

We hear today about people building themselves up. In some instances this means body-building. There is a strong emphasis on this today. Physical exercise is very popular. All kinds of sporting equipment is being sold to keep us in shape. Diets are very popular with some people (and should be with others). We have our athletic clubs. Our young people are training right now for a bike trip this summer. And this is all good as long as these things do not become an obsession with us.

Now we can take some of the things that are included in body-building and apply it to the meaning of this phrase, "building up yourselves." But with one special emphasis. And I suppose this part could be applied to those who have not yet gotten their full growth.

This statement means that all of us need to grow—to grow spiritually.

We, all of us, were born into the family of God as spiritual babes, and we need to grow.

Let me remind you of what Peter said in 1 Pet. 2:2, 3 and in 2 Pet. 3:18. (Quote.)

This was the problem that the writer of Hebrews faced when he began to write about the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew that those believers would have trouble understanding it because they had not grown. Cf. Heb. 5:11-6:1.

Paul spoke of spiritual growth when he was speaking of the work of the men whom the Lord has given to the church as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Cf. Eph. 4:11-16.

TO BE HOLY
SANCTIFICATION

Another word for this in the Bible is the word "edification." Still another is "perfect." It means to be mature. Just in human life we cannot become mature apart from mental and emotional and physical growth, so maturity in spiritual things is impossible without spiritual growth.

It has always been true, and it is still true today that many of the Lord's people remain in a state of spiritual infancy. They never grow. And pastors are, to a great extent, to be blamed. They are not concerned about the spiritual growth of their people, and probably because they are not really growing themselves. Remember that I told you that this is the responsibility of every Christian. And so it is the responsibility of pastors as much as anyone else. We need to grow, too. We all need

to grow. And we never get to the place where we no longer need to grow.

I hope I have said enough to get you thinking about this again. And I hope that you will do something about it if you have not been growing in the Lord.

But, you may say, how do we grow? This takes us to the last part of our text:

IV. "ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH."

What did Jude mean by this expression, "your most holy faith"?

Some say that he was simply saying that their faith needed to be strengthened, that our faith needs to be strengthened.

It certainly is true that our faith needs to be strengthened. A growing Christian will have a growing faith. But I do not strengthen my faith by my faith. My faith needs to be strengthened by something outside of itself. What could that be?

Well, let us let Jude answer that question.

Look back to v. 3. Here Jude expressed his purpose in writing this epistle. And it was here that he exhorted them that they would "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The Greek reads like this:

That you would earnestly contend for
the once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints faith.

What was that FAITH which was once-for-all delivered unto them? Where was it?

It is the truth contained in our Bibles. It was (and is) the Word of God. After all, did not Paul say that

Faith cometh by hearing,
and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17)?

Now we are ready to see what Jude meant when he said that the people of God are to build themselves up on their most holy faith. Their "most holy faith" is the Bible. He was speaking about THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE. Peter said we grow by the Word.

After all, we cannot contend for something which we do not know, can we? To grow as a Christian I do not go to a athletic club, or eat a special diet of particular foods. The only way I can grow is by taking in the Word of God,

taking it into my heart, understanding it, and seeking by the grace of God to make it my very life.

This means that you and I need to be reading our Bibles--reading them daily. And we need to pray that, as we read, the Holy Spirit will be teaching us. This is why we need to go to church--to hear the Word of God, so that we can grow. This is why we memorize it. This is why we talk about the Word to each other. And all of this must ultimately be aimed at the transformation of our lives. We not only need to be hearers of the Word, BUT DOERS! Cf. Jas. 1:22.

Concl: Are you reading your Bible during the week--every day? Do you ask the Lord to help you understand it? Do you come to church because you want to learn more about God, more about the Lord Jesus Christ, more about the Holy Spirit, more about all of the wonderful teachings of Scripture? If not, that ought to be your purpose.

But let me also say that building up ourselves in our most holy faith is not just a doctrinal matter; IT IS A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT PRACTICAL MATTER. We show that we are growing. We show that we are really understanding the Bible, when we are living like the Bible tells us to live. I always get suspicious of the person who says he is a Christian but who refuses to be submissive to the Word of God.

Do you see now why I began my message by saying about this first command of Jude's that:

- 1) It ought to be our main concern every day that we live,
- 2) It is our responsibility to make sure that we are growing,
- 3) We need to be concerned about ourselves concerning this before we can rightly be concerned about others.
- 4) And we never can consider that our growing days are over until the Lord comes, or until He takes us to heaven. And it might very well be that we will continue to grow up there, who knows?

Look at the prayers of the apostles in the NT and you will see that they were concerned about what the believers knew, and how they were living. That is what Jude was saying, and that is what we need to be concerned about. May the Lord enable all of us to continue "building up" ourselves "on" our "most holy faith."

Perhaps you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. You have been trying to live like a Christian without being a Christian, and have wondered why you have been having such a difficult time. You need to be born again before you can live, and you can only be born again as God does a work in

your heart. And the evidence that He has done that work will be that you are trusting Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. So I hope, in the providence of God, that this may be the time and the place when you will pass from death to life and go out of here today rejoicing that Jesus Christ is your Saviour.

Let us pray.

THE SAINTS' GREATEST NEED
Part III

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER
Jude 20-23

Text: "Praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20b).

Intro: We have been seeing in our consideration of vv. 20, 21 that "keep yourselves in the love of God" is the main statement, and that the other three are related to it and help us to understand what it means to keep ourselves in the love of God.

But I want to point out another thing today as we come to the latter part of v. 20. It is this: The participial statements (those ending in -ing) are also related to each other. By that I mean that if we are to be (1) building up ourselves in our most holy faith, we must (2) understand and practice what it means to pray in the Holy Spirit.

There is actually only one other verse in the NT that speaks specifically about praying in the Spirit. That is Eph. 6:18. This is what it says:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication
in the Spirit,
and watching thereunto with all perseverance
and supplication for all saints.

Both of these verses use the preposition "in." In the original language it means, by means of. This means that the Holy Spirit is the One by Whom we are enabled to pray. We cannot really pray without Him. And since all Christians pray, or should pray, it is essential that we know what it means to pray in the Holy Spirit.

But, just in case there is someone here this morning who does not know Who or what the Holy Spirit is, let us settle that before we go any farther.

I. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

A. He is a Person.

He is not just some kind of an influence, or mystical power. He is a Person. He is a living Person Who thinks and acts. He is spoken of in Scripture as a Teacher. He restrains people so that they cannot do what they might want to do, and, as our text indicates, He empowers people so that they are able to do what otherwise they could not do. Always in Scripture He is spoken of as a Person.

There are times when a neuter pronoun may be used in referring to the Holy Spirit, but that is only because the word "Spirit" in the Greek language is neuter. Cf. Rom. 8:16. But He is a real, living Person.

B. He is a divine Person.

He is a Member of the Godhead. He is equal in Deity with the Father, and with the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is, therefore, eternal, absolutely holy (without sin), all-wise, everywhere present, and infinite in His power. He never began to exist; He was not created. He has always existed.

He is just as deserving of our worship, and of our trust, as either the Father or the Son.

No one is ever mentioned in connection with the Father and the Son like the Holy Spirit is. For example, cf. Matt. 28:20,

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When the Apostle Paul concluded his second epistle to the Corinthians, he said this:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all. Amen (2 Cor. 13:14).

The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the Spirit of God, and at other times as the Spirit of Christ. He is a divine Person.

And like the other Members of the Godhead,

C. He is a spiritual Being.

This does not mean that He is not real. Remember that the greatest reality is with the eternal things, not with the temporal things which we see all around us. They are temporal and temporary; the unseen things of the Godhead are eternal.

I have been referring to Him as the Holy Spirit. The KJV uses the word "Ghost." Why they have done this, I do not know. When the word "Spirit" is used by itself, as in Jude 19, it is called "Spirit." But when the same word is used with the word "Holy," as in our text, they used the word "Ghost." You never have the word "Ghost" by itself when referring to the Holy Spirit. With our use of the word ghost today, speaking of a phantom or spook, we ought to be able to

see that it is bad to use that word to refer to the Holy Spirit. He does not have a body like you and I do, but He is a real living Person, nevertheless.

A second question:

II. WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

I have already mentioned that since the Holy Spirit is God, One of the Members of the Godhead, He is everywhere-present; He is omnipresent. And that makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to be everywhere. And yet, while He is everywhere, the Bible also teaches that He dwells now in a particular place (or particular places), while being, at the same time, present everywhere!

That is hard for us to understand because we cannot fully comprehend things that have to do with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But where in particular is He now?

He is living within every true child of God. He lives in me, and He lives in you, if you are truly saved. Listen to these words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ:

And I will pray the Father,
and he shall give you another Comforter,
that he may abide with you for ever;
Even the Spirit of truth,
whom the world cannot receive,
because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:
but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you,
and shall be in you (John 14:16, 17).

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is with us, in us, and He will always be there. I may grieve Him (and often have), but He will never leave me. He is with me and in me forever! I did not ask Him to come to dwell in me; He just came, came the moment I was saved. And He is in me, and in you (if you are a true Christian) as our Comforter (Paraclete) and as our Teacher.

This is very, very important for every Christian to know. It is amazing truth, isn't it? Do you fully understand this? Neither do I. But we can believe it. And we must believe it because it is taught by the Word of God. It does not mean that I have to pray for Him; He is there. It does not mean that I have to speak in tongues in order to know that He is there; He is there because the Lord said He would be, and I cannot be a Christian without being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Cf. Rom. 8:9.

Such truth will revolutionize your life, your behavior, when once you realize where the Holy Spirit is!

Now if you want to learn more about the Holy Spirit, you join with us in Sunday School starting in June because we are going to be spending the summer months studying the Holy Spirit. And to get in the habit of coming at 9:30 each Sunday morning, you have four more Sundays in May to get into the habit. I expect to see all of you in Sunday School. You need that additional time in the Word of God.

But now we come to our text:

III. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

I have already explained to you that the word "in" is used here in an instrumental sense. We are to pray by means of the Holy Spirit, to pray in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Most of us would readily confess that we need help in our praying. THAT IS EXACTLY WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME TO DWELL IN US--TO HELP US PRAY!

How does He do it? Let me try to answer that question for you. First . . .

A. He teaches us what we need to pray for.

How does He do that? Let us look at the context of this expression here in the epistle of Jude.

What was Jude telling us to do? He was telling us to keep ourselves in the love of God? How do we do that? By living in obedience to God. How do we know what God wants us to do? By building ourselves up in our most holy faith. What is our "most holy faith"? It is the Word of God.

So, who is going to teach me the Word of God so that I will understand what He wants me to do? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is my Teacher and my Paraclete, my Helper.

SO PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT MEANS, FIRST OF ALL, THAT I LEARN TO ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO TEACH ME, AND THEN TO ENABLE ME TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD. YOU AND I WILL NEVER LEARN ANYTHING BUT WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US, AND WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING TO PLEASE GOD EXCEPT WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLE US TO DO.

IF YOU AND I ARE PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT WE ARE GOING TO BE PRAYING ABOUT THESE TWO THINGS EVERY DAY:

- (1) OUR NEED TO KNOW THE WORD.
- (2) OUR NEED TO OBEY THE WORD.

B. He teaches us how to pray for what we need.

You know? some churches provide their people with a prayer book. I have seen some of them, and many of them have good things to say about prayer.

But we here at Trinity Bible Church have a prayer book, too. AND WITHOUT HESITATION I SAY THAT IT IS THE BEST PRAYER BOOK THAT HAS EVER BEEN WRITTEN, OR THAT EVER WILL BE WRITTEN. When I say that, perhaps your response is like the woman at the well of Sychar who, when the Lord said that He had water to give her so that she would never thirst again, said,

Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not,
neither come hither to draw (John 4:15).

Maybe you are saying, "Give me this book so that all of my questions about prayer will be answered, and I will know how to pray." I hope you are saying that!

Well, here it is: your BIBLE! Do you mean that you have had a Bible all of these years, and yet never realized that it was a Christian's prayer book, the best in the world, and the best there will ever be?

THE GREATEST LESSON I EVER LEARNED ABOUT PRAYER WAS WHEN I LEARNED FROM MY READING, NOT FROM ANY SERMON I EVER HEARD, BUT FROM MY READING---READING THE OLD BOOKS BY MEN IN THE PAST WHO KNEW WHAT TO PRAY FOR, THAT THE WAY TO PRAY IS BY TURNING THE BIBLE INTO PRAYER. Pray the prayers that are recorded in the Bible. There are lots of them. Claim in prayer the promises that God has given us in His Word. Pray specifically that you will be delivered from the sins that are mentioned in the Bible. Let the Holy Spirit teach you the Word of God, and then you speak to the Father about the things that the Holy Spirit has been teaching you. Most of all, learn to worship like people worshipped in Scripture. The Psalms are excellent for that purpose. The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, and when you and I pray in the Spirit it means that He is going to make our prayers a reflection of what He has been teaching us about God's Word.

It is praying according to the Word of God that gives us power in prayer, and gives us blessing in prayer.

Let me mention one more thing in connection with what it means to pray in the Holy Spirit.

- C. It means that we are depending upon the Holy Spirit to burden us to pray, and then to keep us faithful in praying.

Do you have trouble being faithful in prayer? All of us do. That is where we need to remember that the Holy Spirit has not only been given to us to teach us, but He has been given to help us! He is our Paraclete, the One Who has been called by God to our side to help us pray, to help us understand the Word, to help us in our obedience.

What is going on when you feel burdened to pray about some need that you have, or about some problem that someone else has? Or perhaps you are burdened to pray regularly for someone, and you may not know much about their needs. What is happening? The Holy Spirit is at work. PRAY IN HIM. PRAY IN DEPENDENCE UPON HIM. TRUST HIM TO KEEP YOU FAITHFUL, AND TO PRAY THE RIGHT WAY BECAUSE YOU ARE PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE WORD.

Concl: This is all we have time for today. But I sincerely hope that you have learned something about prayer from these five words: "praying in the Holy Spirit." I hope that the Holy Spirit has been ministering to you as I have been speaking. I hope you understand more about what this all means: "praying in the Holy Spirit."

How foolish we are to think that we can approach the living God any way we want to! That is just as foolish as the Israelite who would approach God with any sacrifice of his own choosing. And we are foolish to think that we have to go some place outside of our Bibles to learn about prayer. All that we need is in the Book. The Holy Spirit knows that "we know not what to pray for as we ought," and so He prays for us, and He teaches us to pray. Read your Bible. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you. And then get on your knees and talk to the Father about the very things that the Holy Spirit has been showing you in the Word. When you pray according to the Word of God, you can be sure that you are praying according to the will of God.

And this is the confidence that we have in him,
that if we ask any thing according to his will,
he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask,
we know that have the petitions that we desired of him
(1 John 5:14, 15).

After the closing hymn: Eph. 2:18. This is the way of salvation, but it is also the way to pray.

THE SAINTS' GREATEST NEED
Part IV

LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF CHRIST
Jude 20-23

Text: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21b).

Scripture Reading: Titus 2:11-15.

Intro: Jude had been speaking of the "mockers" which our Lord Jesus Christ said would be "in the last time," i.e., throughout this present age, prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Both as a safeguard against being influenced by them, and also as a means of overruling their evil influence, Jude in our text admonished the people of God to "keep yourselves in the love of God." That meant that they were to keep themselves in the place of blessing, to keep themselves in such spiritual condition by their daily obedience to the Word that the blessing of the Lord would be upon them.

Now in order to do that, it was necessary for them to do three things. We have discussed the first two, and we are ready today to talk about the third. They are:

- 1) "Building up yourselves in your most holy faith,"
- 2) "Praying in the Holy Spirit,"
- 3) And now, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

In our SS lesson for today we had this statement at the end of Matthew 25, in verse 46, speaking of the final judgment of the wicked and the righteous. Our Lord said of the goats on His left hand,

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:"
But to the sheep on His right hand, He said,
"But the righteous into life eternal."

That sounds a little like our verse in Jude 21 ends, doesn't it? "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ **unto eternal life.**"

Paul also made a similar statement in 2 Tim. 1:18 when he was writing about how good Onesiphorus had been to him. And he said this,

The Lord grant unto him
that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day . . .

There seems to be little doubt but that what Jude was speaking about, and what our Lord was speaking about, and what Paul was speaking about, had to do with the coming of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and the entrance of the believer into glory, into heaven, "unto eternal life."

Paul's exhortation in our Scripture reading also is a related passage when he wrote,

Looking for the blessed hope,
and the glorious appearing of the great God
and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13).

In fact, when Paul wrote the word "looking," he used, not only the same verb, but the same form of the same verb, as that which Jude used in our text for today. But we will see more about that in just a few minutes.

"This same verb is used of the Jews who were looking for the promised Messiah at the time of His first coming" (Mayor, J. B., Expos. Gk. Test., Vol. V, p. 274). Luke told us about Simeon who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). And he also told us about Anna, a prophetess, who "spake of him (our Lord) to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). Mark told us about Joseph of Arimathaea, the man who buried the body of our Lord in his own tomb, that he was a man who "waited for the kingdom of God." Our word "looking" is in all of these verses.

And the noted Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson (VI, 195) says that the same idea is in 2 Pet. 3:14. Let me read v. 13 with it.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise,
look for new heavens and a new earth,
wherein dwelleth righteousness.
Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things,
be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace,
without spot, and blameless.

We are going to be thinking together this morning about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ--His return for us. Jude called it, "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

And this is especially appropriate for us this morning because we are going to observe the Lord's Supper. Paul, in writing about the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11, said in v. 26 that we are to observe this Supper "till he come."

Let me ask you a question or two at this point, and I am not asking for a show of hands. It is this: How many of you have thought THIS MORNING some time, that this might be the day when the Lord will come? Or let me ask this: How many of you have given the coming of the Lord a thought THIS WEEK? This is mother's day, and if your mother is in heaven, you cannot help but think about the coming of the Lord once in a while. But our main purpose should not be to think about being with

our loved ones; it ought to be that we will be with the Lord, that we will see HIM! How do you and I have to answer questions like I have asked? Well, let us go to our text, and see what Jude had to say about the coming of the Lord.

The first is that it is . . .

I. OUR GREAT EXPECTATION.

We see that in the verb, "looking." It is a word which means that we are to be expecting the Lord, anticipating His coming, waiting for Him. BEING PREPARED, HAVING OUR LIVES IN ORDER, FAITHFULLY SERVING

The same verb is not used in Heb. 11:13, but that verse illustrates for us what it means to be "looking." After speaking of Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Sarah, and their descendants, he said,

These all died in faith,
not having received the promises,
but having seen them afar off,
and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,
and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims
on the earth.

To be "looking" means that you believe "the promises," that by faith you have "seen them afar off," that you are "persuaded" that they are true, and have "embraced them," and so you look upon yourself as a stranger and a pilgrim "on the earth."

That is the way we ought to feel, and that is the way we should be acting, about the coming of the Lord. You see, if you are "looking for that blessed hope," you are going to live like a stranger and pilgrim on this earth, not like one whose hopes are centered on this earth. We are here to glorify God. We are here to tell others about the saving grace of God. We are here to serve the Lord. But we do not belong here, and we are not always going to be here. And therefore we are to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

And, although I have said this many times before, let me say it once again--about a verb in the present tense in the Greek. Here it indicates that we are to be "looking" and "looking" and "looking" and "looking." We are to be "looking" every day, and throughout every day, for the coming of the Lord. He said He would come again; believe Him, and keep looking for Him, BECAUSE HE IS GOING TO COME ONE OF THESE DAYS--and it could be today!!!

Paul told Titus that the result of continually looking for the Lord is that our lives will be more holy. (Repeat.) It will give us a greater concern for people who are not

ready for His coming. Some of you may not be ready this morning for the Lord to come because you have never trusted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. I say to you this morning, "He is coming. Get ready. Turn to Christ today, and trust Him to save you from your sins. This the first thing that you need to do to get ready."

But let me go on to the second part of my text, the expression, "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us inquire about . . .

II. THIS UNIQUE TITLE: "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul called it, "the blessed hope." Peter called it a living hope. In writing to the Corinthians Paul called it, "a mystery." Our Lord said, "I will come again." But why did Jude speak of the coming of the Lord as "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

There are several ideas here that ought to be a source of great comfort to us.

"Mercy" is a well-used word in the Bible--both in the OT and in the NT. It is a word which describes one of the main attributes of God. He is a merciful God. Our Lord Jesus Christ is a merciful Saviour. Whenever you think of "mercy" think of it as the antidote, or the cure, for misery. Just as when you think of grace, think of it as the cure for guilt, so when you think of mercy, think of it as the cure for misery. By our sin we have incurred guilt, and sin always produces misery. The answer to man's dilemma because of his sin is to be found in the grace and mercy of God. In fact, there is no other remedy for our sin except in the grace and mercy of God. Cf. Eph. 2:4 ff.

So, the first thing that this expression, "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," tells us is that . . .

A. We do not need to fear the coming of the Lord.

For those who do not know the Lord, His coming will mean more misery than they have ever experienced before. And for those who never receive the Lord, they are going to face an eternity of misery.

But for those who know the Lord, it is a "blessed hope." We look forward to His coming, and we delight in it.

But it means another thing:

- B. It means deliverance from all of the troubles, the trials, the sufferings, the sins, of this present life.

Then, and not until then, will things be "far better" (Phil. 1:23). This world has many joys and blessings for us, because of the goodness of God to us. But it is really a miserable world--a world of sin, of crime, of drugs, of disease, of death. When the Lord Jesus comes, we will be finished with all of that. "Mercy" means being taken out of all of those things which have caused us misery in this life.

And don't let anyone intimidate you by saying that we look for the coming of the Lord just so we can get out of this mess. Who in his right mind would choose this in preference to heaven? We want to be faithful to God and used by Him as long as we are here, but we do not want to stay one minute longer than the Lord wants us to stay. After all, did He not tell us in our text that we should be "looking . . ." ? Did not the Apostle John conclude the NT with his prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20b) ?

It will be God's mercy for us when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back for us.

But let me say one more word about "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." I will say another thing in connection with the last part of our text, "unto eternal life," which is related to "the mercy" of our Lord, but before we go to that, note this:

- C. It is "the mercy of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST.**"

Jude used this full Name of our Lord three times: in v. 4, in v. 17, and here.

The writers of the NT loved to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. They speak of the Lord. And they speak of Jesus. And they speak of Christ. But over and over again they combine two of these Names or Titles, and whenever they can, they use all three!

It is only His full Name that gives us His full glory. He is "the Lord Jesus Christ." And the greatest thing about the coming of the Lord is that it will be the coming of **THE LORD**, of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**! What a mercy it will be to see Him! From that moment on we will be with Him, and what it still more unbelievable, we shall be like Him.

"Mercy" not only delivers us from our sin, and from hell, but "mercy" delivers us right into the presence and into the arms of our dear Saviour, "the Lord Jesus Christ." There can never be anything any more to cause us misery after we are with Him.

This would be a good place to stop, but let me go on to those last two words: "unto eternal life." And let us call it,

III. THE FULL REALIZATION OF OUR HOPE: "unto eternal life."

Perhaps you are thinking, "I thought we already have eternal life!" We do. Cf. John 5:24; 1 John 5:12. Then why did Jude express our entering into eternity as "unto eternal life"?

May I give you two answers to that question. There may be other answers, but I will just give you two.

- A. It means that, for the first time we are going to realize what eternal life means--what it means that we are saved, that we are justified and sanctified and glorified, that we are born again, new creatures in Christ. It may be wonderful to us here on earth that we are saved (and it should be), but we can never understand nor experience here on earth what "eternal life" really means.

But we will experience it then, and we will be unable to contain our joy.

The second thing is this:

- B. It means that it will never come to an end. It is really "ETERNAL life."

We live in a world where everything is continually changing. The things that we feel are going to bring us joy are often disappointing. We disappoint ourselves, and other people disappoint us. Chasing the things in the world is like the hopeless search after a mirage.

But heaven is not going to be like that. Our Lord is not going to be like that. Then we will realize more than we ever have here on earth what it means that He is THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Nobody will ever again harm us. We will never again be able to sin. And nothing can possibly happen up there to bring upon us the misery that we have had here. It will be LIFE and JOY and BLESSEDNESS that will never end. That is certainly one thing that Jude meant by "unto eternal

life." It may be wonderful to be a Christian down here, but the best is yet to come!

Concl: Do you see the connection now between the statements Jude made in these two verses: 20 and 21?

We want to be living like the Lord wants us to live when He comes. To do that we must be obedient to His Word, we must be growing in our knowledge of the truth, and we must be spending time in prayer, "praying in the Holy Spirit." And doing all of this will make us realize more and more that our only hope is in the coming of the Lord, and so we will be waiting, watching, hoping, praying, expecting the coming of our dear Lord.

If you are not a Christian, you do not need me to tell you that sin is real, and that sin brings nothing but misery. It is because man is spiritually blind that he keeps trying to find joy and peace where it can never be found. It can only be found when we turn to the Lord and forsake our sins. May the Spirit of God touch your heart this morning, if you do not know Him, and may you cry out to Him for His salvation through faith in Christ.

For those of us who know the Lord, the path is clear for us, isn't it? "Keep yourself in the love of God." Make sure that you are obeying Him. Your strength to do that will come through the Word, through prayer, and through faithfully, day after day, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

THE JOB TO BE DONE
Jude 22, 23

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

Intro: We have two points remaining in our consideration of the epistle of Jude:

- 1) Jude's practical instruction to the people of God regarding contending for the faith. That is, with whom we need to contend, and what our objective should be. These are found in verses 22 and 23, and they are the verses that I want to consider with you this morning.
- 2) Jude's prayer of benediction for the people of God--one that has been repeated over and over, one that is just as needed today as it ever was. This benediction is found in verses 24 and 25, and we will be looking at them next Sunday, the Lord willing.

The following Sunday I plan to begin the expositional study of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

But in looking at verses 22 and 23 today, let me remind you as we begin of the purpose that Jude had in writing this epistle. He stated it for us in verse 3. (Read.) The particular word that Jude used and translated, "contend," is found nowhere else in the NT--only here! It suggests that the child of God who stands for the truth of the Word of God is going to be engaged in a continuing, agonizing conflict. But that is our calling. The truth is not to be changed to meet the particular whims of every generation. The truth always remains the same, and the servant of the Lord must remain faithful regardless of the opposition, and regardless of how severe it may become. In fact, we must continue to teach the truth of the Word of God even in a day like ours when people are not at all interested in such teaching.

The need for such contention is shown in verses 4 through 16 where Jude linked what was going on in his day with what had gone on in past days--and it continues to go on in our day. We all know, or should know, that we are engaged in a conflict in our day over the same grace of God. As in Jude's day, ours has to do with the grace of God in salvation, and the grace of God with respect to the place that Jesus Christ has in our lives as our Lord. See verse 4.

But after showing the need in verse 4 through 16, Jude explained how we are to contend in verses 17 through 23. Basically this is twofold:

- 1) We contend for the faith by the lives we live, lives lived in obedience to the Word of God, lives characterized by the Word, by holiness, by prayer, and by the confident expectation of the coming of the Lord!

Secondly,

- 2) We contend for the faith by our service in which we bear
 ← witness to others concerning Christ and the Gospel. This
 is what we are going to be considering today in verses 22
 and 23. Let me read them for you. (Read.)

While there is some difference as to what the original text of these two verses said, it does not really affect the meaning of the verses. The KJV which I have read to you indicates that Jude had in mind two groups, and that he indicated this by the words "some" in v. 22, and "others" in v. 23.

Now let me read these verses to you from the NASB, and you will note that that translation, following other Greek MSS indicates that Jude was speaking of three groups. Listen as I read:

And have mercy on some, who are doubting;
 Save others, snatching them out of the fire;
 and on some have mercy with fear,
 hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

The NIV is very similar to the NASB:

Be merciful to those who doubt;
 snatch others from the fire and save them;
 to others show mercy, mixed with fear--
 hating even the closing stained by corrupted flesh.

I realize that it is hard for you to compare the two translations by just listening to them, but I repeat that the difference is mainly that the KJV speaks of two groups; the others speak of three. But what is said in one about the two groups, and in the other about the three, is identical.

It all can be boiled down to this: When we think about contending for the faith, we usually think of showing the enemies of the Gospel that they are wrong, OR we are concerned about protecting ourselves from error. We, of course, are interested in both of those things. BUT JUDE WAS EMPHASIZING IN THESE VERSES THAT THE REAL AND GREATEST OBJECT IN OUR CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH IS THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE PEOPLE CONVICTED BY THE TRUTH AND BROUGHT TO CHRIST FOR SALVATION!

But let us look at the verses, and I am going to approach these verses from the standpoint that Jude was talking about three groups. I do this because this seems to have the best textual support from the Greek MSS, but also because it brings out more clearly all that Jude was saying.

However, before we look at the three groups, let me point out a very important point that Jude was making. It has to do with:

I. THE ATTITUDE OF THE CONTENDER.

I want to call your attention here to two words in our text: the words "compassion" and "fear."

Jude seems to be telling us that if we are to see the blessing of God in our contending for the faith, these two characteristics must be manifested by us: "compassion" and "fear." Let us make sure that we understand what they mean.

A. "Compassion."

The word that Jude used was not a noun, but a verb. It means to "have compassion," as it is in the KJV, or to show compassion. And the word comes from the verb which is the root of the word mercy.

We are to be motivated by mercy, the mercy of God, when we contend for the faith. That means that we are not to do it in anger, or just to have the satisfaction of proving our opponent(s) wrong, but it is our desire to help, to relieve those whose misery can never be relieved by anything but the truth of God's Word!

I encourage you to search your own heart on this point. It is much more natural, and much easier, for us to be hard and harsh than it is for us to be gentle and compassionate and merciful. It is possible for us as believers to be so overbearing and obnoxious in our defense of the truth that no one will want to have anything to do with us, or with the God we claim to represent.

We all need to ask ourselves this question: "Am I the kind of a person I would go to for help if I were in trouble, or if I were seeking to know the truth of God? Do people look upon me as compassionate, or as a proud, hard person?"

But let us go on to the next word:

B. "Fear."

Now obviously Jude did not mean that we were to be afraid of people, or afraid that it would be impossible to defend the truth.

No, it does not mean either of those things. It means this: We are to contend for the faith in the fear of the Lord! We do it to please Him. But we want to do

it in such a way that we do not grieve Him, or displease Him, or dishonor Him. We want to be faithful, on the one hand, not turning away from a difficult situation, but, on the other hand, we want to be Christ-like in what we say and what we do. Our Lord was sometimes very severe and very strong in what He had to say, but never did He deal with others, giving them the impression that He would be glad if they went to hell.

Just as our motive in obeying the words of verses 20 and 21 should be to please the Lord, it should be our motive in obeying the words of verses 22 and 23.

Let us never lose sight of the importance of these two words: "compassion" and "fear."

But now let us turn our attention to:

II. THE THREE GROUPS.

We can describe the first group as:

A. Those who are beginning to doubt.

This is probably the meaning of the expression, "making a difference." It should read like this: "And have mercy on some, who are doubting."

They have professed faith in Christ, but somehow they have come into contact with the mockers, and they are just beginning to have some doubts about the grace of God, and about the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives as expressed in the Word. They are beginning to entertain doubts about the Bible. Perhaps they are questioning whether or not the Bible is really the Word of God.

Jude was saying, "Get to them as fast as you can go. Do not be angry with them, but show mercy toward them. Reassure them. Teach them. Pray for them and with them. Answer their questions. Do all that you can to do away with their doubts. Do not minimize their problem. The Enemy has come to snatch away the Word."

This is why a young believer needs the care and oversight of those who are more mature in the faith. A doubter is miserable. He (or she) needs mercy. And he needs it before those doubts are able to take root in his heart and grow.

The second group:

B. Those who need to be snatched out of the fire.

Stronger action needs to be taken here. Stronger language needs to be used—but not angry words. Error has taken hold in the lives of these people. They have believed the mockers, but there is still hope for them.

It is generally thought that Jude had in mind such verses as Amos 4:11 and Zech. 3:2.

In the first of these verses the Lord was saying concerning Israel,

I have overthrown some of you,
as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
and ye were as a firebrand plucked out
of the burning:
yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

In the second He said to Satan concerning Joshua, the priest,

The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan;
even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem
rebuke thee:
is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?

The picture here is one in which God has been dealing with this person who is listening to the mockings of the mocker. Things have been going wrong for him. He has started to feel comfortable again about his sins. He is less concerned about pleasing God than he was before. His attraction toward his former sins is being revived. And he is too blind to understand what is going on. So the servant of the Lord, the child of God has to tell him that, since he has seen the light, and is turning from it, his darkness will be greater than it was before. It would have been better for him never to have known the truth, than having known it, to turn from it. See Matt. 6:23 and 2 Pet. 2:21, 22.

This is a very solemn situation, and calls for emergency efforts to be made.

But what about the third group?

C. Those who are experiencing the defiling effect of following the mockers.

It seems that Jude here was issuing a warning in connection with their service. "Mercy" was still to be manifested. It was still the purpose of the contender to deliver. BUT he was to watch out for

himself, lest he be defiled by the very sins he was opposing.

The expression that that Jude was using was symbolic. The word that he used for "garment" spoke of the inner garment, the garment which was worn next to the flesh. We would probably refer to it as underwear. These are the garments that we change and wash the most frequently. That which has the closest contact with our bodies is in need of washing more frequently. Now that was symbolic of the truth that Jude was speaking. He was using the physical body as a picture of the sinful nature, the flesh. In the OT a man with leprosy had to burn his clothes. We are not only to avoid sin, but we are to hate sin, and anything that has gotten close enough to sin to defile us!

Thus, mercy was to be shown, but with fear. How often it has been the case that the person seeking to help the sinner has been pulled down into sin himself. And remember that Jude was talking about those mockers who had turned "the grace of our God into lasciviousness." They were saying what the mockers had said about Paul's ministry, that we should continue in sin that grace may abound. See Rom. 6:1.

Concl: What a task we have! Jude was not talking here primarily about people outside of the church, but about people inside of the church! He was talking about the work of the leaders of the church, and yet in another sense it is the ministry of every true child of God.

Let me repeat again this morning what I have been saying all along as we have gone through this epistle of Jude. If we are going to contend for "the faith," we have to know what it is. Therefore, it is important for every child of God to acquaint himself with the great and glorious teachings of the Word of God.

But if we are going to contend for the faith, we must be living according to the truth--keeping ourselves in the love of God, etc.

And, finally, if we are going to contend for the faith, we must get our mouths open and contend, not in anger, not as though we were dealing with enemies, but in compassion toward men and in fear toward the Lord, trusting the Lord to use us to turn people back to the truth and back to the Lord.

May the Lord enable every one of us to heed these warnings, and to be prepared to stand for the truth God's Word in these days when people are so unconcerned about what the truth is.

THE BENEDICTION

Jude 24, 25

Intro: The last two verses of the epistle of Jude are at the same time a benediction, a doxology, and a prayer.

They close the epistle as a doxology, ascribing the greatest of glory and praise to God, our Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, as some MSS have it.

They are Jude's prayer for the people of God to whom he was writing--that while they were to keep themselves in the love of God, they would realize that they could only keep themselves there as God kept them.

And they are a benediction, a blessing, because what could be a greater blessing than to come into the realization of the truth that Jude was expressing here.

Now if Jude were praying that they would be kept from falling, we need to ask ourselves the question, Kept from falling from what, and into what? A brief review of the epistle will give us our answer.

Look back to verses 3 and 4 and you will see what Jude meant. There he spoke of men who were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude was concerned about the teaching of grace, and he was concerned about the grace of God in their lives. So, what he was concerned about was that they would fall from grace.

Falling from grace has been an expression used by some believers to describe what they believe is the loss of salvation. They think that it is possible for a Christian to sin so that he will lose his salvation, so that having been on his way to heaven, he would again be on his way to hell.

But the Word of God does not teach this.

The expression, "fallen from grace," is used in Gal. 5:4. This is how Paul used it:

Christ is become of no effect unto you,
whosoever of you are justified by the law;
ye are fallen from grace.

By "fallen from grace" he meant that they had gotten away from grace as the teaching concerning salvation--which is the true teaching. We are saved by grace. Many of the Galatians had believed the false teachers who were among them, who were teaching that they had to keep the law in order to be saved. But that is not what salvation is. So they had "fallen from

grace," and they needed to get back to believing that salvation is by grace alone—from start to finish.

Jude was speaking of falling from grace in a slightly different way, although Galatians and Jude are certainly related to each other in their teaching. But Jude was talking about those false teachers who were exaggerating the grace of God to the point that they were minimizing sin. Therefore, the holiness of their lives was being threatened. It was the idea that, since God is a God of grace, He will forgive your sin, so you do not need to worry about sin. Go ahead and commit all of the sin that you want to.

And so we are ready to see what Jude was concerned about, and what Paul was concerned about. When you fall from grace, you fall into sin. And that applies to whether you become a legalist like the Galatians, or you are in danger of becoming licentious like the people to whom Jude was writing. Whenever the doctrine of grace is corrupted, the lives of God's people are corrupted.

And let me say today that there are comparatively few of the Lord's people who that salvation is of grace—ALL OF GRACE! Many do not believe in the total depravity and inability of man because they continue to appeal to man's free will, when the truth is that man's will is in bondage. They continue to use emotional appeals and pressure-methods of various kinds to get people to accept Christ because they do not believe the words of the Lord Jesus when He said,

No man can come to me,
except the Father which hath sent me draw him
(John 6:44a).

They do not believe that our sovereign God has in grace chosen those whom He intends to save. They believe that there is something meritorious about man's faith, and that those who believe are worthy to be saved, and those who do not believe are not worthy to be saved. The Bible teaches that no one is worthy to be saved, and that our faith, saving faith, does not come from us, but it is the gift of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). And every person who believes you can lose your salvation does not fully believe in grace because they think that man, by his disobedience, can ruin it all.

And do we not find a large segment of the Christian population today who are careless about sin. Holiness does not have a very high priority with many who profess to be Christians. Interest in Bible teaching has never been lower during my lifetime than it is today. And it is the Word in our hearts that keeps us from sin.

I could go on and on today talking about how the grace of God

has been twisted in our generation so that millions of professing Christians no longer feel uncomfortable with sin. Whether they are truly saved or not, God is the Judge. But I can tell you that anyone who tolerates sin in his life, and anyone who feels that he can be either justified or sanctified by the law, has fallen from grace.

But Jude and Paul both declare that this is not necessary. And Jude wrote in our text for today,
 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
 and to present you . . .

Now let me ask you a question about these last two verses of Jude's epistle: What is the outstanding emphasis in these verses?

I wish I could give you time to think about that, and give me your answer. But since this is not the time for a delay like that, let me answer the question for you. **THE OUTSTANDING EMPHASIS IN THIS VERSE IS ON GOD!** This is not only a benediction, a blessing which Jude was praying for, but it is a doxology, one of the greatest in the Bible, telling us about the majesty and the glory and the power of our God, the only God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, my God and your God (if Christ is your Saviour). This is the point that Jude was making as he closed his epistle. This is the God of grace, of all grace, the God who ordained our salvation, salvation from sin. And so let me direct your attention to our wonderful God for the next few minutes--and I will limit myself to what Jude wrote here.

I. OUR GOD.

The first thing that Jude said was,

- A. He "is able." "Now unto him **that is able** to keep you from falling."

What Jude meant by that expression is this: God is a God of power. It is power that He has within Himself, so it is divine power, greater than human power. He does not need to trust anyone else to strengthen Him like we do; He is the source of all power, and that power is His. He is not dependent upon anyone outside of Himself. His very name, God, means power!

Notice a second thing about God:

- B. He is the only true God that there is. See v. 25.

You and I do not have a lot of options if we are really looking for someone to help us. God is our

Helper, or we are without any real help. A lot of people hold out great promises, but there is really no one else who can really be called God--and when I say that I am including the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So if we are trusting in ourselves, trying to build up our self-confidence, or our self-image, we are on a dead-end street! The One we need, and the only One, is GOD!

Here is a third point:

C. He is a wise God.

This word is not in some of the MSS, but it is in others. And even if we were not here we know that the Bible teaches that God is not only wise, but all-wise. He is infinite in His knowledge and wisdom and understanding. He is never wrong. He is ignorant of nothing.

And let me say that His wisdom has been displayed in our salvation. And so Jude called Him . . .

D. Our Saviour.

He did not die for us, but He planned our salvation. And the only way that He could possibly have saved any of us is by grace. And if I really understand why the Lord Jesus died, I certainly am not going to have an ear for those teachers who try to make me think that grace means that I can be saved and go on in my sin!

When we stop and think why we have been saved, why we are forgiven, why we are different from what we used to be, and why we are on our way to heaven, it is all because of God, our Saviour. He planned it all, and He chose us to be His children.

But then notice that Jude, in v. 25, used a string of words, and they all apply to God. There are . . .

E. Four great attributes of God.

1. Glory.

This is the revelation of the fullness of God, of all that He has been pleased to reveal of Himself, which is for our good. God's glory is His goodness made known--and you have that all through the Bible.

2. Majesty.

The greatness of God. You and I could never have conceived of such a God. He is great in His presence, great in His power, great in His love, in His mercy, in His grace.

3. Dominion.

Here we have another word for power. There are three of them in these two verses:

- 1) He is able in v. 24.
- 2) Dominion--here.
- 3) Power--the next word.

This word means that His power is not something that God just holds within Himself, but it is a power which He displays. It is continually being manifested for His own glory, and for the fulfillment of His purposes. He is a mighty God in action.

4. Power.

This word means authority, sovereignty. It indicates that none is greater than our God, and that He is working out His will in all circumstances, in all people, and in all nations. We have a sovereign God. No one can successfully oppose Him. He is the Mighty God.

The last attribute is one that has to do with all that I have said about God so far. And it is in those words . . .

4. Both now and ever.

The Greek reads like this: before all the ages, and now, and unto all the ages. What it means is from eternity past, all through time, and continuing on through all of eternity to come. An outstanding Greek scholar made this statement about this expression: It is "as complete a statement of eternity as can be made in human language" (Robertson, A. T., VI, p. 196).

What does this tell us about God? It tells us that all that this verse declares about God has been true before time began, it continues throughout time, and will continue forever.

Who can even begin to understand the eternity of

God?

His power will never turn to weakness. His wisdom will never become folly. His glory will never turn to shame. His greatness will never be surpassed. His sovereignty will never be subdued. To sum it up: God will never cease to be God. What wonderful truth we have here.

But now let us take all of these wonderful truths and apply them to what Jude was saying here in this benediction. The grace of God was being threatened in the lives of these believers. They stood in danger of falling from grace into their former sins, and perhaps into some new ones, if they believed the mockers, the false teachers. Who could help them? Just One, and that was GOD!

And so let us look, finally, at:

II. THE PEOPLE OF GOD: PRESERVED, PRESENTED, PRAISING.

A. PRESERVED: God was able to keep them from falling.

The One Who keeps His people never sleeps. Cf. Psalms 121:4. We are kept in grace, kept from sinning, kept for the glory of God here on earth. We do not have to sin because we have One Who is able to keep us from falling.

But He can do even more than that!

B. PRESENTED.

This is yet future, but it is just as certain as the fact that we can be kept.

We are not only going to be presented to the Father "before the presence of his glory," but it will be "with exceeding joy" (or what Peter also called, "exceeding joy" in 1 Peter 4:13)--our exceeding joy, and perhaps the exceeding joy of our heavenly Father. And, what is more unbelievable, we will be presented "faultless"--without blemish, with all of the evidences of sin gone! This word is found six times in the NT: Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Col. 1:22; Heb. 9:14; here in Jude; Rev. 14:5. It means "the absence of anything amiss in a sacrifice, or anything which would render it unworthy to be offered" (Trench, Synonyms, p. 379). We will be worthy only because of God's grace bestowed upon us in Christ. The joy will be ours, but the glory will be God's.

C. PRAISING.

The truth of v. 24 leads to the praise, the worship, the adoration, of v. 25. For us to give all of these characteristics to God does not mean that He does not have them until we give them to Him, but we give them as we recognize that this is what our God is, and that only such a God could do the mighty and glorious work required in v. 24. For us to be presented "faultless" has to mean that we will be presented "in" Christ and "like" Christ!

Concl: Is it any wonder that Jude concluded with an "Amen"?
And it is any wonder that before that we find him praising the Lord?

Could any believer find any joy which would be comparable to what we have in the Lord by turning from the grace of God to anything else?

Let me close with those great words which Philip Doddridge wrote back in 1755, and which you will find as Hymn #401 in our Trinity Hymnal:

Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace first contrived a way
To save rebellious man,
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace taught my wand'ring feet
To tread the heav'nly road
And new supplies each hour I meet
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the work shall crown
Though everlasting days;
It lays in heav'n the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.