

HWAPP # 2542 504

October 2nd, 1926.

Dear Brother Dillard:

I told you, in Salem, that I would send you some of the articles I have written when I returned home.

I'm sorry to find that I have nothing just ready to send right now. Two or three have been sent in for publication, three or four other manuscripts are loaned out, and I have no copies on hand of articles already published, because they, too, are being read by others.

In a few days some of these will be back, or some new ones will be published, and I will send them on to you as soon as possible.

In the meantime, however, I should like, in this personal letter, to outline to you the methods I am following, and some of the principles I hold to and see whether you agree.

I was born of Quaker stock, as I believe I told you. I was raised in a Christian home, attending church and Sunday school. Like most people, I naturally grew up believing what I had been taught from childhood.

X At about eighteen, I got in with some fellows who were philosophically inclined, and who prided themselves on discussing the so-called "deep" subjects. I guess this appealed to my pride, and I fell in with them. This got me to looking into things. I began to realize I had simply accepted my religious belief as a matter of course. One of the fellows was a Unitarian. I went with him to his church a few times. I listened to the arguments of others who had other beliefs. I talked with several Christian Scientists. I had decided to open my mind. I decided a fellow should, when old enough, look into religion for himself, and decide for himself what he was to believe, instead of following blindly what had been given him. But, as I realize now, my mind hadn't matured enough as yet to really study such things soundly, or to protect myself against improper influences. Somehow, though, none of these other doctrines appealed to me. After I thought I had made a very thorough study of different creeds and beliefs, I decided the Quakers suited me the best, so I hold to their belief.



I realize now that a kind Providence must have been protecting me, for had I gone in for Unitarianism or some ~~some~~ such "rationalistic" doctrine, I probably would be a scoffer and an atheist today. I realize now, too, that I didn't even really know, then, what the Quaker doctrine was, or have any sound basis for judging it.

I didn't understand the Bible, except the philosophy of Proverbs, which always was my favorite book as a boy and young man.

As I grew older, I paid little attention to the Bible, after eighteen. I went to church frequently, but was not a deeply spiritual Christian at all. I was about like the average church-goer today. I took religion as a matter of course, went to church, but I wasn't burning up with it. I was luke-warm. Just as prophecy says the church is today.

I was married at twenty-five. I had sort of gotten out of the church habit during the two years before marriage. My wife had been a Methodist. We started attending church most of the time, altho we went to different churches and belonged to no particular one or denomination. We started to read the Bible. My mother sent us one -- the one I still use -- for Christmas, six months after we were married. We started to read it clear thru, a chapter or more a day. To read aloud, one to the other. My wife had been quite a Bible student, and she seemed to know the Bible pretty well and to understand what she read fairly well. But I didn't. It was just like reading Greek, or Latin or Chinese to me. I didn't understand it. I got nothing out of it.

How many do we find like that today? They "can't understand the Bible when they DO read it?" I didn't know why, then, but I do know now why they can't. They haven't the Holy Spirit to guide them and reveal it to them.

Nevertheless, I did seem to get a blessing from reading it or hearing it read, even tho I didn't understand much of it. I always regarded it as the Word of God, and it was like hearing God's voice -- even if we couldn't understand the meaning of the words, just to hear His voice should bring a blessing.

We finally succeeded in reading it clear thru, except the last few books of the Old Testament. Two or three years later, when we had moved to a Chicago suburb, we joined the Methodist church, and started to attend regularly. My mind and interest, however, was all on business. I had a business of my own in Chicago, and by this time it was doing pretty well and I was beginning to make some money. Church and religion still meant in my life just what it does to the average church-goer. It didn't dominate my life at all. It was a side-issue, at best. A sort of social outlet, too. We went to all the church socials.



At this time ~~was~~ I was full of pride, conceit, and self-esteem. I felt I had very unusual ability, extraordinary talents along certain lines, was exceedingly ambitious so far as business, money, and material success went, and thought I was a pretty smart and important fellow for my years.

My business customers were such corporations as the Good-year Tire and Rubber Co., the Moline Plow Works, the J.I. Case Plow Works, and such large corporations known the world over. I did not have many of them, but they were worth between a thousand and two thousand dollars a year apiece to me. Then came the crash -- the financial depression of 1920-21. Every one of these big corporation customers of mine went into the hands of the receiver. Every one was re-organized, re-financed, policies turned topsy-turvy, and old contracts cancelled and discontinued. I lost \$2,500 in cancelled contracts in one week. This flood of depression swept my business with it. It was a severe crushing blow, for I had developed my business to a point where it was making me more than \$10,000 per year and still going up.

We lost all we had but a little furniture. Worse, it crushed my morale. It took the spirit out of me, conceit and all. I tried to hang on and save the wreck, and this struggle for almost two years, in face of reverses, lack of capital, and debt, collectors, and law-suits, was what took the starch out of me.

Well, I never have gotten back to where I was in a material or financial sense. The first effect of this business crash was to turn my mind completely from religion. Then it brought me back -- then another lull, so far as religious interest went, and then, about a year and a half ago, my interest re-awakened.

I began to study the Bible. I was able, now, to come to it in the proper spirit. My self-pride, vanity and conceit had been laid pretty low. That is what had stood between me and real understanding of spiritual things before. Now I had a sort of spiritual reawakening. I began to understand the Bible.

By nature I am always analyzing things -- always trying to get at the "why" of things, and to understand the basic fundamental, or the central vital point. My business training and experience has been along such lines. Now I began to analyze religion, to try to understand it, and the "why" of it. I am always asking "WHY?" I want to see things explained. I guess it's just my born nature, for I was that way as a little boy.

Now I analyzed things this way: Here in the world are many different religions, and about two or three hundred different sects, denominations, and creeds within the Christian religion. They can't all be right. Most must be wrong. How can a man know, in such a world of religious confusion, who is right, or what to believe?

lawsuits?



Well, to cut a long story short, I'll tell you what I have come to believe about that.

There must be some BASIS for all Christian doctrines and creeds. One man says, "Well, I think if a fellow does what he thinks is right, and treats his fellow man right, that's all he needs to do." Ask a man about some point of doctrine -- say baptism. He replies, "Some say it's necessary and some say it isn't. I think a man should do as he believes. If he thinks he should be baptized, he should be. If not, I can't see that it makes any difference."

All trying to decide for themselves what to believe. Trying to formulate their OWN religion. I saw that most people take their religion either that way, or else they accept blindly what they have been brought up in from childhood.

Now I think a man SHOULD look into these things for himself, for he may have been brought up in a false doctrine. How is he to know who is right or what to believe? Can mortal man create his own religion? Can mortal man decide for himself what he must do to be saved? Can mortal man decide what to believe and in order to have God judge him worthy of eternal life? No, it didn't look to me as if he could. God put us here. God is going to do the judging. So it MUST be GOD'S prerogative to LAY DOWN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS. We should, then, look to GOD to tell us what to believe and what to do. Has God some method of revealing His Will to man? Well, not unless it be the Bible. Christians claim the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. The Bible itself claims it. Now we are getting to the CENTRAL POINT. IS the Bible the inspired Word of God? IS it God's revelation to man? I satisfied myself, not on assumption, but on rational analysis and investigation -- according to facts and my own reasoning -- that it IS! I have accepted it as such. I am absolutely CONVINCED, beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt, that it is. And I'm familiar with all the atheist's objections and arguments against it. Alright, then -- we have a starting point. It is God's prerogative to lay down the terms and conditions. Man cannot decide religious doctrines and creeds for himself. God HAS laid down His Will -- and we find it in the Bible. The Bible, then, is our source of doctrines and instruction. Not what some man believes or thinks. Not what I think or WANT to believe. But what God, thru His inspired Word, says I MUST believe, accept, and do.

Well, there are any number of denominations, sects and creeds all of which claim to look solely to the Bible -- who claim their every doctrine and belief is based upon Bible doctrine and teachings. And yet they disagree. Each one claims it has the "faith once delivered to the Saints." Each thinks it has a monopoly on understanding God's Word. "WE are the people," each says. "WE, and we alone, are God's body on earth."

Still it was rather confusing. Which is right? In my



method of analyzing, it seemed to me that we are now getting down to a question of INTERPRETATION.

Now how are we to know who INTERPRETS the Bible correctly? Is it possible for human man to UNDERSTAND it?

Well, I had gotten to the point where salvation depends upon observing God's conditions and commands and terms, revealed in the Bible. Unless we can understand and interpret what God is trying to tell us in that Bible, then the whole plan breaks down and fails. God wouldn't permit that. What's God's plan, or way, of revealing to us the MEANING of His Word? To go to church and let the preacher interpret it for us? That's what most folks do. But according to my analysis, that wouldn't do. That's what the Catholics do. The pope claims to be infallible in the interpretation of Scripture. To trust another HUMAN MORTAL MAN to tell me what the Bible means and what it says for me to believe and do is to place temptation before that man -- to place my hope of salvation in a mortal MAN. That plan won't do, for nearly all preachers disagree -- and I don't know which to believe.

No, I went into the Bible to see for myself, and I found that IT gives us the answer. We are not to look to the pope, or our local preacher, or a rabbi. WE ARE TO LOOK TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, who "shall guide us into all truth." The HOLY SPIRIT is the TEACHER, according to the Bible.

The Bible says "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of the Lord, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM!" - Ask the preacher? NO! Ask the Lord! The Lord, Himself, promises in His Word to reveal His Will to us, thru the Holy Spirit, if we ask Him, and trust Him to do it, and WILLINGLY RECEIVE WHAT HE REVEALS.

Some folks will not LET the Holy Spirit reveal God's message to them. They will accept it up to the point where it means doing something they don't want to do -- giving up something they don't WANT to give up -- or suffering persecution or jibing of friends. There they stop. Most folks believe only what they WANT to believe. They are not willing to accept and believe and do what GOD tells them. When they hit that point, they have reached the cross-roads -- and they have taken the wrong fork of the road.

Well, I ASKED the Lord. And I want to tell you that never until I got down on my knees and asked the Lord to open my eyes to an understanding of His Word -- to send the Holy Spirit to reveal its meaning -- and assured Him of my willingness to accept it -- did I ever understand the Bible. From that minute on, I began to understand it!

He put me to some mighty severe tests. You can't realize what tests I have had to go thru. The first test of all was to try my WILLINGNESS to receive God's Word. He revealed to me some things I had never believed, and DID NOT



WANT to believe. He revealed some things that sent my mind staggering. I saw that if I was to receive His Word, and submit to His Will, I was going to have to accept some things and do some things I didn't want to accept or do!

Baptism, for instance, was one. I had been brought up a Quaker, and Quakers do not believe in water baptism. The real truth of baptism was revealed to me -- an understanding of it -- the WHY of it. Quaker preachers found out I was thinking of being baptized. One spent two or three hours trying to assure me I shouldn't do it, or did not need to. I fought it out, and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, won. Dr. Dean of Binson Memorial Baptist church here in Portland baptized me.

I had to accept other things I didn't want to. But I did it. I believe now that just as long as I do two things, the Lord will continue to reveal the truth to me thru His inspired Word. Those two things are to ASK Him to do it, and to be WILLING to RECEIVE His Word. Just as soon as I begin to turn my back on something He sees fit to reveal to me, right then and there my growing in understanding and grace will cease -- at least until I repent.

I have talked to others, and I know that this experience is borne out. I truly believe the Lord has revealed to me some NEW TRUTH -- that is, new to this generation. Not in any inspired visions or dreams. I don't take much stock in that, and when anyone claims to be an inspired prophet and to have received a vision direct from God I believe in ~~asking~~ applying the test ~~with~~ of the Bible, which commands us to "PROVE all things." What has been revealed to me, too, is only what has been in that old Bible all the time, and was once, surely generally known and understood and followed. But the world has departed so far -- church belief got so far off during the dark ages of Catholic domination -- that they have not yet come back into the WHOLE truth, and there are fragments of old truth which may be revealed to anyone willing to receive it, and who will SEARCH the Scriptures for it, and ASK of God for it. I know one very spiritual man. He has been so close to God he has been able to bring about the healing of many sick people thru prayer. I gave him something which had been revealed to me, asking him to tell me whether he thought I was right. He studied it over with his minister. A few days later I called for the paper I had left with him. "Why, yes, Brother," he said, "that seems to be scriptural, all right -- I can't see anything wrong with it. But I wouldn't bother about that. That isn't important. We'd better keep our minds on the more important things, Brother." You see, it was a truth which was new to him -- and WHICH HE DID NOT WANT TO ACCEPT. That man saw it was scriptural -- that is, God revealed the truth of it to him. AND THEN HE TURNED HIS BACK ON IT! He refused to accept it. It wasn't what his church had always taught and believed. His church people



probably would laugh at him, persecute him at least  
boldly, and possibly throw him out, if he accepted it.  
The preacher couldn't accept it, because it was not in  
the written doctrine and creed of his church. He might  
lose his job and salary if he accepted it. A preacher,  
you see, is in a tough position. It is more difficult  
for him to accept new light from the Bible than a layman.  
It's a bigger test for him. He might lose his position.

The man I have been talking about had prayed for my wife  
and she was instantly, miraculously, divinely healed in a  
way that ~~was~~ simply struck awe into our friends and  
relatives. After this incident I asked him to go with  
me to a cripple -- a man with a paralyzed spine -- who  
wanted to be divinely healed and apparently had the faith  
to be. But my friend wouldn't do it. He couldn't pray  
for the sick any more. His church people held a big  
tabernacle revival this summer. He always had been one of  
their leaders -- a real power in the work. This summer,  
he just hung around and did nothing. He told me he had  
lost his power and didn't know what was the matter. I  
knew, but I also knew I didn't dare tell him. He had  
rejected some new light the Lord had revealed to him!  
He had turned his back on the Holy Spirit! So the Holy  
Spirit simply is not working thru him as He used to do.  
And will not, either, until this man repents, and  
accepts what he plainly saw.

Now I'm going to close this. It has turned into a long  
letter, and I only intended to write a page or two.

My fundamental belief, then, is this. The churches each  
have their own doctrines and beliefs -- all differing in  
more or less fundamental points. Our protestant churches  
have sprung out of the dark ages of Catholicism, which  
absorbed much Paganism. The great Protestant founders  
saw new light, accepted it, and the Protestant movement  
grew with great power. They ~~xxxxxx~~ brought back MUCH of  
the original true pure doctrine which Christ left with the  
Apostles. But they did not, being human, receive it ALL.  
The trouble has been that their followers have written  
out a definite creed, printed it, and stuck to it --  
taking just that and no more. Some parts of it have been  
error. This they refuse to sift out and reject. Other bits  
of the original pure doctrine might be added from time to  
time, but THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES. They have written  
out what they have decided to believe, and closed the book.  
That is why we have so many denominations. Many of them  
-- the Baptists, the Methodists, who have not turned Modern-  
ist, the Quakers, the Nazarenes, etc. -- have the true  
light and Gospel on the major points of salvation. But sal-  
vation means BEING BORN AGAIN -- born of the Spirit -- a  
Spiritual BIRTH. A new-born baby, in the flesh, must be  
fed to live. So a new-born Spiritual being must be fed  
or it will starve and die. It must be fed spiritual food.  
Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by  
EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."



When we are first ~~born~~ born of the Spirit, at conversion, we are SPIRITUAL BABES -- BABES IN CHRIST, as Paul said. And, according to the Bible, we must GROW IN GRACE.

Now there is where the churches fall down. Many denominations, including the ones I mentioned, have their doctrines pretty straight on SALVATION. They get sinners converted, and they bring into the world new-born spiritual babes -- BUT THEY FALL DOWN ON THE SUCCEEDING POINTS OF DOCTRINE WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GROW IN GRACE AND TRUTH -- on the things which FOLLOW salvation and conversion, in order to grow and REMAIN saved.

The Bible says "He that endureth unto the END, the same shall be saved."

We have to live a Christian life, after we are converted.

So many seem to think all there is to it is repenting once, going forward in church, shaking the preacher's hand, publicly accepting Christ, and then just attending church.

I suppose over half of the converts at big revivals backslide, and lose the salvation they got. The reason is lack of foundation -- and the foundation is SOUND BIBLE DOCTRINE. They don't grow in grace. They don't grow in truth.

They get introduced to God at conversion, but they don't go on getting better and better acquainted with Him! If you meet a man on the street, and don't see or hear of him again for two or three years, he won't know you if he passes you on the street. And so God doesn't know some who were once converted any more.

When we read the Bible, we let God talk to us. When we pray, we talk to God. Thus do we hold conversation with God. Thus do we get better acquainted with Him. The Bible commands us to SEARCH the Scriptures. Not just read -- to SEARCH. That means look for things, hunt out the truth, search till we find it. The Bible also commands us to "pray without ceasing."

My personal belief, then, is this: I believe in attending church for the inspiration and the good we get/out of it -- for the Christian fellow-ship with other people who also are trying to lead a Christian life. But for doctrine and belief, I believe in going -- not to the church, or the preacher, or any human-being, organization or institution -- but TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, who promises to guide us into ALL truth, if we will let Him! We must ASK God to reveal His message to us -- claim His promise to do it -- and WILLINGLY receive it, whether it's what we WANT or not. We must SEARCH the Scriptures, PROVE all things very carefully and cautiously, beware of false doctrines, holding fast to that which is good. That is the course I am trying to follow. Do you think I am on the right track?

Sincerely,