



I am the bread of Life.

John 6:35

# **A COMMUNICANT'S WORK BOOK**



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## THE FAITH PROFESSED:

*Question:* Do you confess your faith in God as your heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier?

*Answer:* I do.

*Question:* Do you promise in dependence on Divine grace, to serve the Lord and to walk in His ways all the days of your life?

*Answer:* I do.

*Question:* Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share dutifully in the worship and service of the Church, and to give of your substance, as the Lord may prosper you, for the advancement of His Kingdom throughout the world?

*Answer:* I do.

## **AN INVITATION AND A GUIDE TO THE CLASS MEMBER**

When a flower opens, it opens by itself. No human hands have plucked the petals apart. No gardener has given the flower its colour or its perfume. God put them there. He calls the bloom gently into radiant life.

This is how we become Christians. The life of God has first to be planted within us, by His Holy Spirit. We do not fully know how this happens, but we do know that it reveals itself when we say "yes" to God's invitation to believe.

You are here in this instruction class as a seeker, or as an interested inquirer. Even if you have already found Christ you will profit most by taking the humblest place. Let us begin our study with the words of Jesus about little children: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 18:3).

In these words Jesus asks us to come in deep sincerity. He asks us to relax our grasp of long-held doubts and fears and disbelief. He cannot help us if we carry these weapons into His presence.

Jesus also calls us to come in true simplicity of heart. A little child trusts himself to his parents. God would have us approach Him without excuses, without pride, without cleverness. He knows us through and through. He knows what we are. He knows what He meant us to be. He is too loving to say anything needlessly severe; too true to say anything untrue; nor can He have any motive to disown us.

As we begin you may feel little concern about becoming a Christian. Do not let this deter you. As week by week we read and study together you will find that God unfolds His way of salvation gradually. Begin to pray daily for help. Take God at His Word. Jesus has promised, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Perhaps you have been seeking, as best you knew how, for a long time. This does not mean that you are a Christian. But it does mean that you are ready to become one. Jesus promised, "They that seek shall find." Believe His promise and expect to find the Saviour nearer than you thought.

At any stage in our study you may seek the help of your

minister. He will point you to Christ. He will meet with you. He will open up the Scriptures. He will pray for you and with you.

If you feel unworthy to go on, do not hastily give up. When you feel least worthy it is the sign that God is already at work in your heart. The light will break, and you will find peace with God.

If you feel that you are not good enough to be a Christian, not good enough to join the church, not good enough to come to the Lord's Table you have made a great and necessary discovery. No one is good enough to be a Christian. That is why we cannot be saved without Christ. Jesus said: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick ... I did not come to invite virtuous people, but sinners." (Matthew 9:13, N.E.B.)

You are not alone in your search. God is calling to Himself a vast company from every nation. However solitary you may now feel you will find in the fellowship of Christ's people that you are a member of a world-wide family. Wherever the coming years may take you in the course of your life's work, there you will find the people of God and you will be welcomed as a brother or sister in Christ.

You are about to step into the most enduring fellowship which this world has known. Race, colour, class, creed — these are no barriers to true believers who are "all one in Christ Jesus." There is only one church, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is only one way to enter it, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our study is meant to help us to know what "believe" means. It is not WHAT we believe, but WHOM that really matters. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," is the answer Paul gave to the jailer in the prison at Philippi (Acts 16:31).

To believe in Christ we need to know the Bible facts about God and about ourselves. This will bring us to see our need of salvation through Christ, who He is and what He has done for us.

The next section Faith and its Fruits is meant to help those who have never welcomed Christ into their hearts to do so. It also aims to make clear what happens when we take this step.

The rest of the study then unfolds the normal Christian life. We live our new life by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. We are by faith members of the body of Christ, His church. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were given by Christ to His people to make vivid and real to them the salvation which He alone can bestow.

The last two sections are meant to answer the question: How can I grow in the Christian life? They speak of the life of communion with God, and the life of obedience to God.

On the inside of this cover are printed the vows which each new communicant member is required to take, as a public profession of faith at the service of admission. These vows are concerned with essentials. Pray often with the vows open before you. Ask God to write them upon your heart.

'And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come",  
And let him that heareth say, "Come",  
And let him that is athirst come.  
And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Revelation 22:17

Yours very sincerely,

.....  
**Minister**

*Note*

Studies 2 to 9 provide for a daily personal Bible study on some aspect of the theme for the week. A blank form for use is found at Study 2. You are advised to use a note book in which to enter each day's outline. These outlines can then form the basis of the weekly Communicants' Class discussion. This simple Bible study method may become your regular day by day plan for knowing your Bible.

## PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY - a daily plan

Date ..... Passage .....

Subject .....

Key verse:

Key person:

Five important facts: (verse reference)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The main lesson for me today:

## Second Study

### KNOWING GOD

*How can I know the living God?*

The Bible is God's book and is the only reliable source of our knowledge of God.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

1. God is the Creator.  
Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28
2. God is a real Person. He loves; He saves; He keeps.  
Exodus 3:1-10
3. God is three Persons; the Bible teaches four facts:—  
The Father is God. John 17:1-3.  
The Lord Jesus Christ His Son is God. John 20:28.  
The Holy Spirit is God. Acts 5:3, 4.  
Yet, there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4.  
The word 'Trinity' means that God is three Persons, ever living and acting as one living and true God. Matthew 28:18-20.
4. God is light. This speaks of His purity, holiness, righteousness, and freedom from all evil, ignorance and weakness.  
Isaiah 6:1-8.
5. God is love. He showed His love in sending Jesus Christ to die for us.  
Romans 5:1-8.
6. God is seen and known best in His Son Jesus Christ. John 14:6-14. Jesus is our only 'way' to God.

### KNOWING MYSELF

*How can I know myself?*

1. Man was made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26-28. This means that Adam and Eve had minds which revered God, hearts which loved God, and wills which obeyed God. They were unspoiled, trusting and generous, sinless and happy.
2. The creation of man and woman was God's idea. They were made for fellowship with God and with each other.
3. Man has fallen. Genesis 3:1-24 tells the facts of the entrance

of sin through Satan and the fall of Adam and Eve through temptation. This disobedience was an act of rebellion against God (v. 6). They became frightened of God (v. 8, 10). They lost their fellowship with God (v. 8).

4. Man is like that today (Ephesians 2:1, 5, 12). No one is perfect. None of us is as good as he would like to be. We have all come short of God's purpose for our lives.

### A PRAYER TO USE:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my thoughts.  
And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting."

Psalm 139:23, 24.

### KNOWING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

1. Sin separates us from the living and true God. 1 John 1:5-6. This separation from God explains the loneliness, fear, and unhappiness of people today.
2. Sin deceives us and hardens us against God. Psalm 19:12. And the worst of it is we cannot tell that we are being deceived and hardened.
3. Sin means slavery. Sin not only blinds; it binds. We fall into all kinds of bondage, John 8:34. Where Christ does not rule, sin does, Romans 6:17.
4. Sin hurts others, including our loved ones. Sin is selfish. We put ourselves first, others second and God last. Sin is at the root of all society's disorders, in the family, in industry, and in international relationships.
5. God takes sin seriously. He has to. This is His world. God holds us guilty in Adam our ancestor (John 8:34). All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

### SUMMARY:

Sin blinds  
Sin binds  
Sin separates  
Sin destroys

### WHAT CAN TAKE AWAY MY SIN?

1. I cannot save myself. Man as sinner is under the wrath of God. Romans 1:18.
2. Only God can save me from my sins. Christ died for my sins. This is the answer for every sinner's need of forgiveness. God has done all that is necessary to redeem us from death by the sacrifice of His Son and His resurrection from the dead.

### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY THIS WEEK:—

- MON: God is a real Person. Exodus 3:1-10.  
TUES: God is the Creator. Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28.  
WED: God is holy. Isaiah 6:1-8.  
THURS: Jesus is the way to God. John 14:6-14.  
FRID: How sin entered our lives. Genesis 3:1-24.  
SAT: Sin brings death and judgment. Romans 5:14-21.  
SUN: Hiding sin, or confessing it to God. 1 John 1:5-10.

Try to make your own notes of each day's reading, following the outline for Personal Bible Study.

(see page 4)

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY - a daily plan

Date ..... Passage .....

Subject .....

Key verse:

Key person:

Five important facts: (verse reference)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The main lesson for me today:

## KNOWING JESUS CHRIST

### Who He is

1. Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was always with the Father from the beginning, John 1:1; Proverbs 8:22, 30.
2. "In the beginning" does not mean "from the time of creation". It means that Christ was begotten of His father "before all worlds". He was not created, as Jehovah's Witnesses wrongly teach. Psalm 2:7 and John 1:1; 1 John 1:1.
3. For the sake of saving sinful mankind Christ covenanted with the Father from eternity, to come to earth. To do this He had to humble Himself to become man, and to die the death of the cross. Philippians 2:5-9.
4. In His incarnation Christ took upon Himself the ordinary life of a human being, in body and soul. Hebrews 2:14; Galatians 4:4.
5. His incarnation took place by a miracle. The power of God's Holy Spirit came upon the virgin Mary, enabling her to conceive a child without the need for a human father. Luke 1:35, and see Isaiah 7:14; 9:7.
6. Before Christ was conceived He was the eternal Son of God and had only the nature of God. After He was conceived he took upon Himself the nature of man. Thus the Lord Jesus had two distinct natures:  
He was truly and fully God, and  
He was truly and fully man.
7. These two natures did not make Jesus two persons. No, He was one person, The God-man, Romans 9:5.
8. Jesus was born from Mary's line of ancestors, from King David, and from Abraham. Thus He was the "Son of David", Matthew 20:30; 21:9; and He was the promised "seed of Abraham" Galatians 3:14, 16.
9. Although Mary was in the line of the fallen Adam, like ourselves, her Son Jesus was sinless, Hebrews 7:26. God miraculously cut off the hereditary sinfulness which we receive from Adam, through our parents, Hebrews 4:15.
10. Because Jesus was the God-man, and because He was sinless, He was able and worthy to be "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

### *What He did*

The Humiliation of Christ means:

1. His being born, and born in a low condition, Luke 2:7.
2. His being made under the law; Galatians 4:4.
3. His suffering the miseries of this life, Isaiah 53:3.
4. His suffering the wrath of God. Matthew 27:46.
5. His suffering the cursed death of the cross. Philippians 2:8.
6. His being buried. Matthew 27:59, 60.
7. His continuing under the power of death for a time. Matthew 12:40.

The Exaltation of Christ means:

1. His rising again from the dead on the third day. 1 Corinthians 15:4.
2. His ascending up into heaven. Acts 1:9-11.
3. His sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Mark 16:19.
4. His coming to judge the world at the last day. Acts 17:31.

### *The three great ministries of Christ*

1. Christ as Preacher points the way to God, reveals the will of God and is Himself the Person who saves us. Luke 4:16-32.
2. Christ as Priest. Christ had two works to do for us:  
First He had to pay the price of our sins. Hebrews 9:28. When Christ died, His death did two things:
  - (a) His sacrificial death paid the price of our sins, and thus satisfied God's justice. Romans 5:18.
  - (b) His sacrificial death reconciled us sinners to God (when we were still enemies). Romans 5:10.Second He has still to make intercession for His people who are daily in need of cleansing, deliverance and comfort. This ministry of intercession Christ carries on at the throne of God in heaven. He intercedes on the basis of His sacrifice; He pleads His own death as the sufficient ground for our daily cleansing and deliverance.
3. Christ as King
  - (a) Christ subdues us to Himself. Psalm 110:3  
His Word convicts us. Hebrews 4:12, 13.  
His blood cleanses us. 1 John 1:7.

His Spirit makes us love His law. Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

- (b) Christ rules and defends us. Isaiah 33:22  
He rules us by His Word and Spirit. Acts 1:8.  
He defends us by His power and presence.  
Matthew 28:18-20.
- (c) Christ restrains and conquers all His and our enemies.  
1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Psalm 2:7-12.

### **MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY THIS WEEK**

- MON: The Son of God came down to earth. John 1:1-14.  
TUES: The virgin birth of Jesus. Luke 1:26-35.  
WED: The humiliation and exaltation of Christ.  
Philippians 2:5-9.  
THURS: The bearer of our sins. Isaiah 53.  
FRID: Our Preacher. Luke 4:16-32.  
SAT: Our Priest. Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16.  
SUN: Our King. Matthew 28:16-20.

Try to make your own notes of each day's reading, following the outline for Personal Bible Study.

## WHAT IS FAITH?

When I know that I am a sinner in God's sight, when I realise that I am lost and under judgment, when I learn that Jesus has died in my place — is there anything more that must be done if I am to be saved?

Yes! I must take the Lord Jesus as my own personal Saviour. This is faith.

There are many vivid words used in the Bible to tell us exactly what faith is. Faith is an action word by which I rise and go to Christ, knowing that "He must save and He alone". Here are some of the Bible words which make it clear what saving faith means:—

"COME unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."  
(Matthew 11:28)

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and OPEN THE DOOR, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me."  
(Revelation 3:20)

"As many as RECEIVED Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."  
(John 1:12)

"LOOK unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else."  
(Isaiah 45:22)

In each of these verses I see what I need to do; this is faith. also see what God does in Christ; this is salvation.

MY PART is to come — GOD'S PART is to give rest.

My part is to open the door — God's part is to come in.

My part is to receive Christ — God's part is to make me His son or daughter.

My part is to look to God — God's part is to save me.

## THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Faith clings to Christ's cross with empty hands. We cannot buy forgiveness; we cannot even deserve it. We can only come as bankrupts and spread our liabilities before God's eyes. To do this

is to believe that God will receive us, and not cast us out. This is saving faith.

Just as I am without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee;  
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

If you have never taken this step before, you may do so here and now. You may bow your head and thank Him for His invitation to come and be saved. Here is a simple prayer which sums up what this means:

### MY PRAYER

"Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for dying upon the Cross for me. I open my heart to Thee now. Come into my life, I pray. Be my Saviour from the guilt and power of sin. I surrender to Thee now. I believe Thy promises. Lord, I am Thine, and Thou art mine for ever.

Amen."

### THE FRUITS OF FAITH

So you have come to Christ!

You have opened the door of your heart to Him. How has God responded to your coming? What has He now done?

He has given you 'rest' as He promised in Matthew 11:28. This rest is first of all REST OF CONSCIENCE, arising from the knowledge that your sins have been blotted out. Paul says "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). There is no peace like peace of conscience, as we realise that all our sins have been laid upon Christ on the Cross, and we shall never come up for judgment (John 5:24).

He has given you a CLEAN HEART AND LIFE. John said, "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). Thus we are forgiven and restored to the fellowship of a loving Heavenly Father. But something more is said. We are cleansed.

Our conscience is no longer against us. We need no longer live like guilty criminals before a holy God. We are clean. The past with all its faults and failures and dark blots is for ever gone. The blood of Christ has done this. Day by day God promises that "if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

GOD HAS RECEIVED YOU INTO THIS FAMILY OF HIS REDEEMED CHILDREN. This is sometimes called our 'adoption' (Galatians 4:5). God's family is a large family comprising all believers who have ever lived. It is a family with high and holy privileges, for the children are also heirs of God. The inheritance is heaven. In this family you are to find constant fellowship and encouragement. And in it you are to work for the well-being of all its members and the honour of Jesus Christ its Head.

GOD HAS GIVEN YOU ETERNAL LIFE. "This life is in His Son." Until we received Christ as our Saviour we were "perishing" (John 3:36). The moment we received Christ we "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). Now that we have Christ we shall "never perish" (John 10:28). To have Christ is to possess eternal life.

GOD PROMISES TO KEEP YOU TO THE END OF EARTH'S JOURNEY. Temptations old and new will threaten us; our own hearts will betray us; even the best people will disappoint us; great fears will agitate us. Even now we wonder how we shall ever be able to stand. But nothing can separate us from our Saviour. Those whom He saves He keeps. (John 10:28, Isaiah 54:10).

### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

- MON: Faith is my action in receiving Christ. John 1:6-14.
- TUES: God has given me rest. Matthew 11:25-30.
- WED: God has given me a clean heart and life. 1 John 1:5-10.
- THURS: God has received me into His family. Galatians 4:1-7.
- FRID: God has given me eternal life. John 3:14-16, 36.
- SAT: God has promised to keep me. John 10:27-30.
- SUN: I thank God for all His gifts to me. Psalm 103:1-5.

## GOD'S LIFE IN MINE

1. I now have God in my life.

When I received Christ as my Saviour I was "born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

The Holy Spirit now dwells for ever in my heart and life (Romans 8:9).

He is God's "guarantee" that I am his property and possession for ever (Ephesians 1:13-14).

My body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Holy Spirit opens my eyes to understand the Bible when I read it. (1 John 2:20). He whispers the peace of pardon and sonship in the depths of my soul. (Romans 8:15-16).

He helps me to pray with new purpose and desire (Romans 8:16-27).

He gives me a sensitive conscience, and a heart that delights to please God.

He causes the "fruit of the Spirit" to mature in my life (Galatians 5:22-23).

He puts to death the old sins which used to master and humiliate me, so that their power is broken (Romans 8:2-3).

2. I am now "in Christ".

This union by which I am united to the very life of Christ began at conversion.

I was "crucified" with Christ (Romans 6:6).

I was "buried" with Christ (Colossians 2:12).

I was "raised" with Christ (Colossians 2:12-13).

I am now living with Christ on a new level of fellowship, goodness and usefulness (Colossians 3:1-3).

3. I now have two natures.

To counteract sin's evil purpose Christ's own life has been given to me. These two natures are at variance, and there is life-long civil war. Victory for the Christian depends upon his ally. If I live in an attitude of daily obedience to the will of Christ "sin shall not have dominion over" me. (Romans 6:11-14).

I will be able to say with Paul, "I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13).

The threefold secret of victory over sin is:

Reckon yourself to be "dead" to sin and alive to Christ, Romans 6:11.

Resist the old temptations in the power of Christ, Matthew 4:10.

Yield yourself, moment by moment, in glad obedience to Christ's holy will. Romans 6:13.

#### 4. Justification.

In Romans 3:24 Paul says that Christians have been "justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

What is justification? The Shorter Catechism says: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone." (Q. 33).

So "justification" speaks of a twofold action of God on my behalf. First He has laid all my sins upon Christ. Secondly he has laid all Christ's righteousness upon me. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

#### 5. Sanctification.

In the New Testament Christians are often called "saints". The moment Christ gave me His Holy Spirit He set about the hidden miracle of changing me until I begin to look like Christ Himself (2 Corinthians 3:18). This work of God is called sanctification. It is gradual, progressive, often slow as we learn to yield our whole life to God's Spirit.

What is sanctification? "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." (Shorter Catechism Q. 35).

The hidden work of the Holy Spirit explains the gradual change in the tastes, attitudes and disposition of Christians. It also explains our changed appearance as our very faces begin to reflect the beauty of Christ.

#### A Prayer

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me!  
All His wondrous compassion and purity.  
O Thou Spirit divine; all my nature refine,  
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

#### 6. Assurance

God means me to know for sure that I have eternal life (1 John 5:13). Assurance springs from my resting in the words of the Bible. When doubt or fear or temptation grow strong I must go at once to God's Word. Here my assurance is nourished.

The Holy Spirit is God's secret worker in my heart. He is ever present to "bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16).

So I need not depend on my feelings. These will change, but God does not change in His constancy towards His own children. As I find my feet in the Christian life, and learn to abide in Christ, I become less and less dependent upon my feelings.

But this assurance may be lost. It is forfeited by disobedience, by wilful sin, by neglect of God's Word, by prayerlessness. Whenever I lose the sense of Christ's presence I must go at once to the words of 1 John 1:9 and say them over to myself, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

- MON: I now have God in my life. Romans 8:9-17.
- TUES: I am now united with Christ for ever. Colossians 2:6-12; 3:1-4.
- WED: I now have two contrary natures. Romans 6:8-14; 7:21-25.
- THURS: I thank God that He has put me right with Him. Romans 3:21-28.
- FRID: I thank God that He is making me like Christ. Ephesians 3:14-21.
- SAT: I thank God that I can be sure of Eternal life. 1 John 5:1-4; 10-15.
- SUN: Abiding in Christ. John 15:1-14.

## THE SACRAMENTS

The subject of Studies 6 and 7 is the Sacraments. The previous studies are all preparatory to this. They show us what it means to be a Christian.

### 1. The Sacraments

Jesus has given two sacraments to His people — baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are like portraits of Himself. Both of these sacraments have their roots in God's church of the Old Testament times. We shall first look at the sacrament of baptism and see how it is the preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (You will need to tell your minister, at this point whether you have already been baptised.)

### 2. The Sacrament of Baptism

While God saves us as individuals, He groups us in families. The family is the unit of society. The family is also the unit in God's society, the church. From the earliest times we find God using the home as a kind of family church where the father was expected to be the minister and the children were expected to grow up under the teaching of God's Word and will.

- (a) Children in the O.T. Church. About the year 2,000 B.C. God told Abraham that He would be a God to him and to his descendants for ever. Abraham embraced this solemn privilege. In return God required his obedient love, and that of his descendants after him. But God did not leave this agreement to be a matter of mere words. He made Abraham engage in a solemn covenant, which, like a contract at law, bound both God and Abraham to the terms of the covenant. The formality which God imposed on Abraham's descendants was called circumcision. If any Hebrew father failed to attend to this for his son, the son was regarded as outside the church of God. (Read Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-14).
- (b) Children in the N.T. Church. Most of us were baptised as children before we knew anything about it. This was in keeping with God's command to Christian parents. They brought us to baptism because God had promised to save their children IF THEY AS PARENTS FULFILLED THEIR

**PART OF THE COVENANT.** The covenant sign is no longer a mark in the flesh; it is now the sign of sprinkled water. But both signs point to the same covenant (Colossians 2:11-12). To scorn the sign is to scorn the God of the covenant (Genesis 17:14).

Baptism is obedience to something God requires of all Christian parents. It anticipates the gift of a clean heart in the experience of our conversion. This experience usually comes much later than our baptism. But our baptism was the great act of faith which bound God to save us. And He has!

- (c) The baptism of children. The Presbyterian Church, in common with most branches of the Christian Church, baptises children. Our Church does not use the word 'Christening' but keeps to the Bible term baptism. At the baptism of a child the parent(s) are required to declare that they are believers, for God's promise in baptism is only to believers and their children. By this sacrament God covenants to receive the child as His own and to work savingly in the child's heart by the Holy Spirit, in His own appointed time. The parent(s) for their part promise to bring up their child in the true faith of Christ and to trust God to fulfil His promise in His own time. The congregation promise to receive the child into their fellowship and to help in his training in the way of Christ.
- (d) The Baptism of Adults. In Presbyterian churches today it is a familiar sight to witness the baptism of young people and adults upon the profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. These believers are making their own vows to God, and are receiving baptism as a pledge of a three fold bond between themselves and Christ.

"Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's."

(Shorter Catechism Ans. 94).

- (e) The mode of baptism. The word sprinkling is used frequently in the Bible for the application of the blood of the sacrifices, Hebrews 9:19-23. It is used as a metaphor for our cleansing from sin in such passages as Hebrews 10:22, 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2. There is no clear case of baptism by immersion in the N.T. Hence we follow the Scriptures when we baptise by sprinkling or pouring.

### 3. The link between Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is linked with the Lord's Supper as engagement is linked with marriage. Our engagement was entered into between God and our parents on our behalf. God has done His saving work in our hearts as He promised. He has brought us to know our sin and His grace; our need of forgiveness and Christ's cleansing blood. We have trusted Jesus as our personal Saviour and have committed our lives to Him as our Lord and our God.

In coming to the Lord's Table we now confirm, gladly and of our own free-will, that we are trusting in Christ as our Saviour, that we shall walk in His ways all the days of our life, and that we shall share in the life and witness of His church in the world.

### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

- MON:** Children and circumcision. Genesis 17:1-14.  
**TUES:** God's covenant laws. Exodus 20:1-17.  
**WED:** How God writes His laws on our heart. Jeremiah 31:31-34.  
**THURS:** Sprinkling as the Bible mode of baptism. Ezekiel 36:25-28.  
**FRID:** Christ's command to baptise. Matthew 28:16-20.  
**SAT:** The baptism of the Ethiopian. Acts 8:26-40.  
**SUN:** The baptism of the jailer's family. Acts 16:25-34.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER\***

\* This study is based upon Rev. James G. Goold's booklet First Communion, chapter 3.

Look at the Bible story of the Lord's Supper as given in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 26:17-30.

God the Father had planned that the death of Christ should coincide with the great Jewish feast of remembrance, called the Passover (v. 17). This festival had its origin about 1,200 years before Christ. This was the festival which Jesus kept with His disciples on the very night of His betrayal. On the table in front of Him were the Passover lamb, the cup of wine, the dry unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs.

Jesus followed the usual order of the old Passover festival until He came to the unleavened bread. To the surprise of His disciples He quietly said: "Take, eat; this is My body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." Jesus was pointing to the meaning of His death on the following day. It was to be the way of deliverance from the guilt and judgment of our sin, and from the power of Satan.

Then Jesus took the cup and gave thanks in prayer. He then gave it to them saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."

At last the old Passover festival had found its true fulfilment in Christ, our Passover, Who was sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7). Next day Jesus was crucified. No further sacrifice for sin is needed, for the Bible says that Christ has "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

## **THE LORD'S SUPPER is**

(a) A Sacrament of thanksgiving.

We give thanks to God for His love in saving us from the guilt and penalty of our sins; to Jesus Christ for giving Himself as a sacrifice upon the Cross; and to the Holy Spirit Who has taken us by the hand and gently led us to Christ. Our thanksgiving will find fresh language every time we meet at the Lord's Table:— gratitude for new mercies, for God's faithfulness, for victory over tempta-

tions, for cleansing when we have fallen, for answered prayer in the lives of those we love, for the sure hope of everlasting life.

(b) A Sacrament of commemoration.

We remember specially His death. His own words were "This is My Body BROKEN for you." The Cross was central to His life purpose. He came to live a perfect life, and then to lay down that blameless life as an offering for our sins, all our sins. "By His stripes we are healed."

(c) A Sacrament of communion.

This communion is first of all with Christ; but it is also communion with one another. All believers are "one". Paul says "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

This communion of believers with their Saviour and with each other is imperfect in this life. We look for the life of perfected communion in heaven. We shall see Christ face to face and be like Him. Towards this fuller life the whole redeemed church of God is moving.

(d) A Sacrament of consecration.

Every Christian feels at the Lord's Supper that he wants to be better. Often we are led to make new resolves. Sometimes Christ tells us of new service which He wants us to undertake for Him. This is part of the response of a Christian to the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. The blood of His Cross seals and confirms a covenant bond by which Christ binds Himself to be our Saviour and our Keeper.

But such a covenant involves us. We are the other parties to this covenant. Our part is to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, to find out what God's will is for our lives and to do it, to renounce all compromising allegiance to the world, to live daily in close communion with our Saviour.

The Pre-communion Service will be the occasion for new members to make the profession of faith and be received into fellowship with Christ's Church.

Before going to Communion make an offering of yourself to Jesus in such words as these:

O Lord Jesus

Help me to love Thee better than I have done;

Help me to be more obedient to Thy voice within me.

Help me to serve Thee in some definite way.

Help me to deny myself, and take up my cross daily, and follow Thee.

I present myself a living sacrifice to Thee who hast died for me.

Every Communion Service should be a time of re-consecration of our whole self to God.

A Warning.

Paul gives a solemn warning about the danger of coming to the Lord's Table when we are not fit to be there. Read again 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.

A Command.

In closing we do well to remember that all believers are COMMANDED to come to the Lord's Table. Jesus our Lord has the right to command. Twice He has said: "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

## MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

- MON: The story of the Passover. Exodus 12:21-28.  
TUES: The death of Christ foretold. Isaiah 53.  
WED: The story of the Lord's Supper. Matthew 26:17-30.  
THURS: The meaning of Christ's death. Hebrews 9:12-28.  
FRID: The meaning of Communion. 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.  
SAT: No compromise with evil. 1 Corinthians 10:16-21.  
SUN: Christ is coming for His people. Revelation 22:6, 7, 12-14, 17-21.

## GOING ON WITH CHRIST

Check point:

The Lord's Table is not the end of my preparation. It is just the end of the beginning. I have made my profession of faith in the Lord Jesus publicly. The Kirk Session has, in Christ's Name, enrolled me among the communicant members of the congregation. How can I go on?

I grow in the Christian life by using the means of grace which Christ freely offers me. These are:

- The Bible
- Prayer
- Church fellowship
- A clear witness
- Christian service

### 1. THE BIBLE is my daily food.

- It is bread (Matthew 4:4).
- It is meat (Hebrews 5:14).
- It is milk (1 Peter 2:2).
- It is honey (Psalm 119:103).
- It is our "life" (Philippians 2:16).

How to Use my Bible

I shall use it daily, and begin with prayer to God for help.

I shall use the Personal Bible Study method, unless I can find a better method.

I shall keep my personal notebook as a record of my discoveries in God's Word.

I shall bring my Bible to Church and follow closely the outline of the passage in preaching.

I shall underline and memorise key verses.

I shall practise using the Bible to answer my doubts, temptations and difficulties.

I shall never argue with God's Word. "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only." (James 1:22).

### 2. PRAYER

(a) Private prayer (Read Matthew 6:5-15).

As a baby begins to breathe after it is born, so a Christian starts to pray when he is re-born as a child of God. The life of Christian communion is two-fold:

God speaks with me in His Word  
I speak with God in prayer.

My prayer needs a definite time each day (Daniel 6:10).

My prayer needs a quiet place (Matthew 6:6).

My prayer needs a simple plan (Philippians 4:6, 7).

Prayer springs from God's Holy Spirit's prompting me. This inward prompting accompanies the reading of His Word. Such reading supplies the main thoughts for my prayers—

Causes for thanksgiving to God.  
Failures and sins to confess to God.  
Worries and fears to leave with God.  
Loved ones and friends to remember before God.  
Hopes and longings to pour out to God.

Keep your own Prayer Guide in your Bible. Make a list of those you wish to pray for regularly.

- (b) Group prayer. Jesus promised special help to even two who unite to pray (Matthew 18:19). Group prayer gives power and effectiveness to all our work. Join or form a prayer group and learn the deep ministry of intercession.
- (c) Congregational prayer. The public prayers offered in Church are meant to express the desires and feelings of all the congregation. Try to think into each prayer and to make it your own. Use the quiet moments before and after worship, and during the Communion service for prayer.

### 3. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Reasons:

The example of Christ (Luke 4:16).  
The practice of the Psalmist (Psalm 122:1).  
The rule of the early Christians (Acts 2:41, 42).  
The warning of Hebrews 10:25.

Rewards:

We grow under the preaching of God's Word.  
We thrive on Christian fellowship.  
We discover that we can help others.  
We find opportunities of service.  
We are now part of a world fellowship.

Sunday is called "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10).

It is the memorial of three great events:—

God's creation of the world.  
God's gift of a day of rest.  
God's raising His Son from the grave.

Thus I shall please my Lord by doing His Will on His Day.

#### 4. WITNESS FOR CHRIST (Read Mark 8:34-38).

My witness is through my life and character.  
My witness is through my home life. Romans 16:3-5a.  
My witness is through my job. Genesis 39:22, 23.  
My witness is through my words. Proverbs 25:11.  
Memorise Scripture and use it aptly.  
Do not argue.  
Pray for those to whom you witness.

#### 5. SERVICE FOR GOD. We shall deal with this in Study 9.

### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

MON: God means me to grow. 2 Peter 1:1-11.  
TUES: I grow as I feed upon God's Word. Psalm 19:7-14.  
WED: I grow as I keep close to God in prayer. Matthew 6:5-15.  
THURS: I grow as I attend Church regularly. Psalm 122.  
FRID: I grow as I witness for Christ to others. Luke 15:1-10.  
SAT: I grow as I try to serve Him. Romans 12:6-13.  
SUN: The Christian life is the happy life. Matthew 5:1-12.

## “FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST”

### 1. Counting the Cost.

What it cost God to save me. John 3:16.

What it cost the Lord Jesus to save me. Philippians 2:5-8.

What it will cost me to be a Christian. Luke 14:25-33.

What it costs to reject Christ. Mark 8:34-38.

### 2. Living the Life

How to be a Christian at school. Daniel 1:8, 9, 17.

How to be a Christian at work. Colossians 3:22, 23.

How to prepare for a Christian partner. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

How to have a Christian home. Psalm 128.

How to bring others to Christ. John 1:37-46.

### 3. Using the gifts

God's gift of time. Exodus 20:8-10.

God's gift of a healthy body. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

God's gift of a renewed mind. Romans 12:1-5.

God's gift of friendship and an open home. Acts 18:24-26.

God's gift of means and money:—

God's portion — 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2.

Christ's example — 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

My response in systematic tithing through the weekly offering envelope.

### 4. Enriching the fellowship.

By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ I now belong to Him. By the unseen miracle of the new birth I am now 'baptised into one body' by His Spirit, and am inseparably one with Christ and all His people, in heaven and on earth. 1 Corinthians 12:13.

I now have spiritual gifts to use for the good of the whole Church. Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11-13.

I shall exercise these gifts to grow in grace, to please God and to help others.

FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. This shall be my motto as I seek to serve Him in the ever-expanding circles of His Church on earth.

1. I shall serve Him as a member of this congregation; I am now charged with the trust of witnessing to others, of being loyal to the testimony of this Church, and of sharing in God's mission to a lost world.
2. I shall serve Him as part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The name 'Presbyterian' is taken from the New Testament Greek word 'presbyter' which means 'elder'. Our Church is a Church ruled by Christ, through His Word and Spirit, and according to the Bible plan of ruling Elders in each congregation. For further history and teaching read "Continue Presbyterian" by L. M. McKinnon.
3. I shall serve Him as part of the Worldwide Church. Wherever I go I shall find the Church and share in its life and witness, regardless of denomination, race or language. The Church is the greatest family in the world and the most enduring.

#### SHARING IN THE MISSION

Through my own congregation to my neighbours.  
 Through my own congregation to my country.  
 Through my own congregation to the world.

#### MY RESPONSE

Take my life, and let it be  
 Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
 Take my moments and my days;  
 Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
 At Thy feet, its treasure-store.  
 Take myself, and I will be  
 Ever, only, all for Thee.

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Romans 12:1

#### MY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

MON: Counting the cost. Luke 14:24-33.  
 TUES: Living the life. Romans 12:1-5.  
 WED: Others. John 1:37-46.  
 THURS: A Christian home life. Psalm 128.  
 FRID: Christ's Church my church. Ephesians 5:22-33.  
 SAT: The right use of God's money. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9.  
 SUN: Sharing in God's Mission. Acts 1:6-9.

· "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST"

You are about to be received into the communion fellowship of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the membership of this congregation.

As a memento of this occasion we present you with this booklet.

Already this booklet has helped you to see more clearly what our salvation means.

Let it now become a lifelong reminder of the time of preparation for the Lord's Table and of your covenant to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

..... Minister

..... Session Clerk

Communicant: .....

Date: .....