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Introduction to Book II

In the first book of this trilogy, we discussed the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. They are central and foundational doctrines of which there can be little latitude of thought possible and remain faithful to Scripture and therefore to the true Christian faith. In this second book, we shall discuss various aspects of daily Christian living, which concerns how we apply the crucial doctrines in the first book to daily life both religious and commonplace.

It is in the application of Scripture where we face considerable difficulty and variation in thought as we move from the more intellectual aspects of the faith to the functional side. How we apply theological truths to ourselves affects not only how we think about the Godhead and our salvation, but also how we as men and women conduct our lives before the face of God in the light that we have been given. In doing so, it also affects how we associate with each other, both believers and unbelievers, through our day-to-day involvement with this fallen world.

In the first section of this second book (Section 9), we shall discuss the high standards set forth by God for individual Christian conduct. Unfortunately, this is a goal that man can only see afar as an ideal to be sought after, not something that can be attained by human effort. Nevertheless, those standards do provide us with benchmarks as we find our minds being transformed by the Holy Spirit through his continuous act of our sanctification. The great privilege of being a Christian carries with it serious responsibilities that we dare not ignore. A great part of that responsibility is the stewardship that we have over the Gospel to the extent that we are willing to give our all to broadcast it abroad as a debt we owe to every descendent of Adam's fallen race.

Christian servitude does not go un-rewarded however. Christian benefits and privileges are discussed in Section 10 of this book. God has showered many diverse gifts upon his elect that aid them in their efforts to carry out his holy mandate. Though the struggle is long and often hard, we know that we may bring our every difficulty in life before God in prayer. We know with assurance that He hears us and that He will answer us appropriately according to his sovereign will.

Much of what we have to accomplish in this world requires a concerted effort with other believers. Unfortunately, there is considerable conflict and controversy over what constitutes the Church on earth. We discuss this difficult topic in Section 11 beginning with a study of the Kingdom and the Church. We shall also examine the conflict in thought over how Israel is related to the new covenant Church that stems from two opposing systematic interpretations of Scripture. We shall then study the temporal aspect of the visible Church as it is organized on earth today. The temporal church is an amalgam of true believers (visible Church) and a large infiltration of unbelievers that most often gain control over its operation and goals.

The visible Church on earth has been aided by God with diverse gifts to help it accomplish his will for it in this age. We discuss this in Section 12. The most important gift of all is the Holy Spirit Himself who works through various men to stabilize and anchor the church while it is yet in its temporal state. Without the presence of the elect, the temporal church would immediately degenerate into just another worldly man-made institution having a religious bent. Where the elect were present in insufficient numbers, this tragedy has already befallen many churches. The early visible Church was endowed by various supernatural gifts that aided it in the days of its early expansion. As unbelievers infiltrated

their ranks, however, those gifts were viewed as being intrinsically important without regard to their purpose. Overemphasis of spiritual gifts hid the important Gospel message behind a façade of ritual language. Moreover, it resulted in chaos and disorder in the church itself.

All of this wild attraction to superstition and ritual and the desperate need for order to control it ultimately resulted in the transformation of Christianity into Churchianity. The word Churchianity means, “church worship” whereas Christianity means “Christ worship.” We shall discuss Churchianity in Section 13. Soon every conceivable means was taken by the temporal church to establish its self as a “high church” having the authority of Christ on earth in his absence. The long-standing traditions of baptism and the memorial of the Lord’s Supper were subsequently declared to be sacraments over which the temporal church claimed exclusive authority. Furthermore, the simple Christian worship of Jesus’ resurrection on the first day of the week was declared to be a legalistic Christian Sabbath that forbade most activities on that day and forced the attendance of temporal church functions instead. Not satisfied with one day in seven, every conceivable day was elevated into a “holy day” such that each was seen to have spiritual properties that could only be effectively realized within the domain of the temporal church.

Of course, all of the institutional organization and administration of Churchianity required lots of material wealth to support it and its growing clergy. For that reason, the tithe that God had used to build the Temple and support the Levitical priesthood under the old covenant of law was made over into a pragmatic church doctrine that served its worldly need for money. As the temporal church became sufficiently affluent from tithes alone, large buildings and cathedrals were planned to praise its own grandeur. However, tithes were no longer found to be sufficient for such grandiose goals. Many fund raising schemes were fabricated that increasingly extracted funds from the rich ruling class, but often also preyed upon the unregenerated, the superstitious, and the ignorant. In this respect, the Roman church sold indulgences that were supposed to release the dead from suffering eternal torment and pave the way for them to enter into Heaven. While the Reformation Movement effectively addressed the issue of indulgences, much of this desire for mammon has been carried over into the fund-raising efforts of today’s Protestant churches as well.

Over the years, various delusive rituals and traditions have been built upon the errors of the past. In Section 14, we shall discuss some of those strange traditions. One deeply rooted tradition is that of glossolalia (tongue speaking), as erroneously practiced by the young Corinthian church, which runs rampant within some temporal churches yet today. The current popularity of this tradition is most probably being aided by the mysticism associated with the New Age Movement and the Neo-Paganism so prevalent today. Added to glossolalia, we find all kinds of rituals that are often substituted for true petition and communication with God. We shall discuss ritual healing, ritual prayer, ritual fasting, and lastly the worship of angels all of which is unsupported by Scripture.

Buried under the Sacramentalism of an earlier era, we find that the long standing tradition of baptism is actually quite beneficial to believers as long as it is not corrupted by Churchianity that insists on claiming it as an initiation rite into a temporal church. Baptism is discussed in extensive detail beginning with a detailed word study, the nebulous origin of the ritual, and finally ending with an analysis of today’s practice of this ritual. Unlike baptism, we find that there is one Christian tradition that stands out as being a uniquely Christian ritual that also carries with it the direct authority of Christ. This is what we refer to today as the Lord’s Supper, the Lord’s Table, or Holy Communion. Of course, the temporal

church has done everything that it can to retain exclusive control over this tradition by claiming it as a church sacrament. In doing so, its own massive institution is elevated and memorialized through it thus effectively negating its intended memorial to the death of Christ. Both of those traditions will be discussed in considerable detail in Section 15.

Finally, in Section 16, we shall candidly discuss various controversial life issues that include marriage, divorce, childbirth, feticide, infanticide, child adoption, and a wide range of other issues that are concluded in the last chapter of this final section with a discussion of physical death, suicide, euthanasia, and ultimately the proper disposition of the physical body after death. All of this is discussed from a carefully considered Christian perspective.

With regard to the many errors inherent in Churchianity, we must admit that we have only scratched the surface of the various insidious ways it undermines and mischaracterizes Christianity. All of this reexamination of church tradition will be highly resented by many today. This is quite understandable inasmuch as Churchianity has now hardened into a widely accepted religious form. The Christian faith for many today means accepting church dogma without question, not the acceptance of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Few have ever dared to examine the Churchianity that they hold so dear. This is especially true of those who are directly involved in various functions of the temporal church at a privileged level that such error supports. The laity today has no appetite for further reform, and the paid clergy dare not risk their own livelihood. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship of ignorance exists. There is no intent in this work to destroy the temporal church through this exposition, but to reform it and free it of the Churchianity that encases it. It could be hoped that a biblical survey of Christian application and practice such as this would at least result in sufficient concern that the visible Church can at last be heard above the spiritually ineffective den of noise that Churchianity makes in today's world.