

had been in all God's creation. I commenced reading at the first chapter of Genesis, read unto the days of Noah, and thought my case as bad as the antediluvian lost in the flood. I continued reading until the giving of the law which condemned me, and my sufferings continued to increase. It rang in my mind, Curse God and die. Oh, my soul! it is the opposite of my feelings as far as anything in all God's creation; still it sounded in my ear, Curse God and die! I tried to pray to God to relieve me from this great and unpardonable sin. These words sounded in my mind—Pray without ceasing.—Immediately I undertook to pray—always viewing this to be the only remedy to overcome this great sin which doth so badly beset me—when at my daily avocations, when at the plow handle, and I tried to pray in secret all the time. I found I could not govern my mind for it would rove over the transitory things of time and the evil things of this world. I then would renew my efforts and try to be diligent and pray all the time. I resumed my reading, all my spare hours, commencing at the first of the New Testament, concerning our Saviour and his sufferings. I wept when I read these things. I read the New Testament through and it all condemned me a poor sinner without hope in the world. I often went to meeting, and when opportunity was offered, I would ask the Minister to pray for me. Thus my troubles became so great, my feelings so intense, and my fears so alarming, that death began to stare me in the face. I thought I was going to die and my poor soul would be eternally lost in endless woe and misery. I thought that a violent fever attacked my feeble frame and I took my bed. The family seemed to think I was sick—no questions were asked save concerning my sickness. I often got out of bed and went and tried to pray—night came on, my burden and my feelings were inexpressibly great, my mind was dark, all around me was dark, my sins surrounded me as mountains and began to close in upon me, black horrors seized my frightened soul and I viewed myself to be in one step of hell. I looked up and saw a gleam of light, though very small; I looked below and saw an immense unbounded lake of fire, I was leaning over it beyond the possibility of recovery, total darkness covered me, and as I went to make the awful leap in the lake of destruction, I cried—Lord, have mercy on my poor soul! In a moment, as quick as thought, I was relieved from this awful situation, all my troubles, all my sufferings, and all my sickness—and had joy and peace within. Jesus, whom I had seen in the vision, had come to my relief—all praise, glory and adoration to his name. My system being very much weakened and enfeebled by much suffering, I soon retired into a slumber; on getting up the next morning everything looked

beautiful. Soon after this I began to meditate on the past and thought that I had some hope that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned my sins. I heard some one tell an experience which resembled what I had felt, yet my troubles went in such a strange way I thought there was something wrong, that such a great sinner as I was could never be forgiven. I resolved, therefore, to try to get my troubles back again; I tried to guard against sins of commission and temptations and the sins of the heart, by incessant prayer, yet I had a wretched wandering mind which I could not control. With all my efforts I could not get the burden back. In the place of doing better I did worse.—Thus I went on from time to time, expecting to receive some better evidence than I had before. I had a desire to use every effort to observe all things whatsoever are commanded in the scriptures to do them. I obtained a hope when about the age of sixteen years, and lay out of what I feel impressed upon me to be my duty until I was twenty-one years of age—during which time my sufferings were very great. I cannot, only in part, express my sufferings during this time. I often went to meeting, loved the people of God, and, when the door of the church was opened, felt a great desire to unite with them but felt too unworthy and sinful. I viewed the Baptists to be the people of God and greatly desired to be with them, but, oh, I was too unworthy! I feared I would bring reproach upon and injure the cause of God. I could not associate or keep company with the wicked. I was too sinful and unworthy to keep company with the righteous yet I greatly desired to be with them. I was a poor castaway, a poor pensioner from time to eternity. My mind was clouded and beset with temptations, trials and tribulations: these sufferings were brought on me by sins of omission. I went to preaching, was constant in prayer, searched the scriptures, yet all this did not lessen or alleviate my sufferings.—There was such a yearning desire to unite with the people of God, that I often vowed to join the church of Christ and find a home among them, and as often did not pay my vows.—Thus I went on for several years—eventually I promised the Lord that I would go to the next meeting, but failed twice. The third time I promised saying—it was right for the Lord to cut me off in death if I longer resisted what was impressed upon me to be my duty. Accordingly the time arrived and when the door was opened it seemed to me that to stay away would be death, and that if I went it would bring reproach upon the cause of God. The time had now come for me to act, life and death were before me. In great weakness of body and mind I arose from my seat and went forward—the Minister invited me to a seat beside him; he told me to give a relation of the dealings of God with my soul. I pro-

ceeded in a short way to do so and was received and the following day was baptized. My mind had peace and my troubles vanished.

I admonish all who have received a hope that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned their sins—to go forward and unite with the church and tarry not, by doing which they will enjoy peace of mind and escape severe chastisement and great troubles.

My travail, from the time I felt myself a sinner until I received hope, was about seven years, and I lay out of my duty about five years, during which time my sufferings were inexpressibly great.

I have written this hoping it may be of some service to some poor soul having a hope in Christ and is yet disobedient—and to his name be the praise.  
JAMES LINDSEY.

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"Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." "But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven: for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his foot-stool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."—Mat. 5: 33, 37.

Oaths which did not conflict with the divine law were allowed and taken by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the law given to national Israel admitted the taking of an oath under certain regulations. But in Christ's sermon to his disciples he in many things draws a striking contrast between what was admissible with national Israel, and that which should be recognized in the gospel dispensation, with spiritual Israel, or in the gospel Church. In the Church of Christ as organized upon the doctrine and order he has given, none but gospel testimony can be admitted, and such testimony can only be obtained from those who are in the kingdom, or Church of Christ, subject to his laws. In this kingdom every man is required to "speak the truth with his neighbor," to speak the truth in love, to state the fact as it is, without an oath. His communication is to be "Yea, yea: or Nay, nay." Assert it to be so as it is, or deny it if not so. That is sufficient testimony from a Baptist. Should any Church member, in order to give more weight and force to his testimony, say "Brethren I am willing to be qualified, or take an oath, or to swear that what I state is truth." This would be going too far and doing more than the law of Christ requires and "whatsoever is more cometh of evil." Such assertions would prove an evil motive, a malicious, worldly Spirit. It would be walking after the flesh, and sowing to the flesh. "It cometh of evil." The

plain, simple, candid statement of the naked truth from those who are of the truth and who love their brethren, and love the Church of God, "in the truth for the truth's sake which is in them," is far more forcible in Zion when asserted by the simple yea, yea; or nay, nay, than when one should propose to swear to the same things.

It is true that in earthly governments "men verily swear by the greater and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife,"—(Heb. 6: 16.) But in the Church of God no form of oath is prescribed, yet every member is a legal witness and is required to speak the truth in love by a plain simple statement of facts, "yea, yea; or nay, nay." There are however, certain strong expressions even by the inspired writers of the New Testament which amount to all the solemnity that could possibly attach to an oath, such as "God is my witness or record." Rom. 1: 9, also 2 Thess. 2: 5, 10. "God knoweth." 2 Cor. 11: 11, 31. "Beloved before God, I lie not." Rom. 9: 1. "I say the truth in Christ and lie not." 1 Tim. 3: 7. "As the truth of Christ is in me." 2 Cor. 4: 10.

I know that many persons have honest religious scruples in regard to taking an oath as prescribed by earthly governments, and they are of opinion that the text restricts them even in this sense as well as in a church relation. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." It is a point that admits of investigation, but should not break fellowship. The followers of Christ, though they belong to a kingdom which is not of this world, yet they are not absolved or released from the obligation to "obey magistrates" in all things which do not conflict with the command of Christ. Hence they are commanded to "submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." 1 Pet. 2: 13. They are required to be subject to the authority of earthly governments for "conscience sake." Rom. 13: 5. It is certain however that no oath can increase the obligation which all men are under at all times to be just, honest, faithful and true, and none are more ready and willing to take an oath than those who intend on first opportunity to violate the sacred obligation. If men will not be true and faithful as officers, as statesmen, as Lawyers, as Doctors, as witnesses, and tax payers, without an oath, it is not likely that they will do any better with it. But where this regulation exists in human laws it seems that Christians may "submit" in the sense of 1 Pet. 2: 13, though they may not fully approve or justify. Christ hath set the example in this particular of subjection. Mat. 17: 27.

But I must bring these remarks to a close. What I have said is by way of engaging attention of brethren to this subject and not for controversy. A free interchanging of thought will always be profitable if guided by the