The longer we live the more important the Bible and the Lord’s church become. Though Solomon said that all we do on earth is “vanity,” the goal of Heaven is not a vain pursuit! Since God and Christ are not “slack concerning their promises” (II Pet. 3:9), either to punish the wicked or to reward the righteous, our faith and trust are not in vain at all. Of course, not following the teaching of Jesus makes one a “foolish man” (Matt. 7:26) in this present world and the eternity to come (Matt. 25:46). For instance, not worshipping “in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24) makes all the worship the world offers “vain” (Matt. 15:9).

Please take your Bible and read Romans 12:1-2. We would analyze it as follows: “I” = apostolic authority; “beseech” = plead, appeal; “brethren” = all Christians; “by the mercies of God” = riches of mercy, or withholding punishment due; “that ye present” = devote; “your bodies” = all yourself, your tongue, hands, feet, intellect, life; “a living sacrifice” = all your power; “holy” = giving honor and service; “acceptable” = pleasing to God; “your spiritual service” = letting your light shine for the benefit of yourself and others; “be not conformed” = not fashioned, or do not copy the world; “but . . . transformed” = changed, converted to Christ; “by the renewing of your mind” = in thinking and conduct directed by the Gospel, which is laid up in your heart; “acceptable” = well pleasing to God. It would be great if the whole world lived by Paul’s teaching!
The church of the Bible is not a denomination. In fact, the only reference to denominationalism in the New Testament condemns division (I Cor. 1:10-13). Many and various are the teachings of denominations concerning their thoughts on God’s plan for saving the world. The different plans offered by men do not change God’s divine plan in the least. Some teach babies should be "baptized" (sprinkled); or, the sinner should pray instead of obey; or, faith alone saves, which is expressly condemned in the Bible (Jas. 2:14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26); or, that Jesus saves and not the church, and one can be saved outside as well as in the church of Christ. None of these are the plan brought to earth by God. God sent His only begotten Son to seek and save the lost (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 19:10). God’s plan was that Jesus should seek the lost by establishing the church. The church was planned, prophesied, promised, and predicted for several hundreds of years before its establishment. In Acts 2, the church is an established reality and is represented as being the place prepared by Christ for the saved (Acts 2:41, 47). THE CHURCH IS NOT A PART OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION; IT IS THE PLAN OF GOD UNTO SALVATION. According to the Bible, men cannot be saved outside of Christ, the church, or body of Christ, all which terms refer to the place of salvation. The plan for entering the church of Christ includes one hearing, believing in Christ with all of his heart, repentance, confession, and being baptized (Acts 8:35-39). Jesus, in carrying out God’s will, never promised to save anyone outside the church which He built with His teaching, and purchased with His blood (Matt. 16:18-19; 28:19-20; Acts 20:28). This is the only institution over which He is head (Eph. 1:22-23), and the only one He promised to save eternally (Eph. 5:23). With these thoughts clearly before us, one expresses his ignorance of the Scriptures and talks foolishly who might say, “I am so glad to hear someone preach Jesus as the Savior and not the Church as the Savior.” When deadly persecution arose with the stoning of Stephen, the members of the church at Jerusalem were “scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria . . . and went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:1-4). Preaching Christ and preaching the Word are one and the same thing (vv. 4, 5), and the same as preaching the church or kingdom (Acts 8:12). How important it is for us to study to be approved of God (II Tim. 2:15).
41st Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship  
Theme: Eternal Security  
October 16-19, 2016

Sunday, October 16

9:30 A.M. Eternal Spiritual Security
10:20 A.M. Defined in Hope and Promise
6:30 P.M. Congregational Singing
7:00 P.M. Defined in Virtue (Moral Living)
8:00 P.M. Defined in Courage (Rev. 21:8)

Gary Colley
Alan E. Highers
Daniel P. Phillips
Willie Alvarenga
Gary Murphy

Monday, October 17

9:00 A.M. Defined in Knowledge (II Tim. 2:15)
10:00 A.M. Defined in Being Cherished (Eph. 5:29)
11:00 A.M. Defined in Brotherly Kindness
LUNCH
1:00 P.M. Defined in Love (I Cor. 13)
2:00 P.M. Defined in Living for God and Heaven
3:00 P.M. Defined in Faith (Heb. 11:6)
6:30 P.M. Congregational Singing
7:00 P.M. Defined in Comfort (I Thess. 4:18)
8:00 P.M. Defined in Heavenly Treasures (Matt. 6:19-21)

Mark Teske
Paul Sain
Dan Cates
Robert Jefferies
John Scaggs, Jr.
Billy Bland
Daniel P. Phillips
Glenn Colley
David Powell

Tuesday, October 18

9:00 A.M. Defined in Jesus, the Author (Heb. 5:8-9)
10:00 A.M. Defined in Drawing Power of God (Jn. 6:44-45)
11:00 A.M. Defined in the Church—Refuge (Matt. 11:28-30)
LUNCH
1:00 P.M. Defined in Conviction
2:00 P.M. Defined in Being a Christian
3:00 P.M. Defined in God’s Plan of Salvation (Rom. 10:1-3)
6:30 P.M. Congregational Singing
7:00 P.M. Defined in Faithfulness (Rev. 2:10)
8:00 P.M. Defined in Promise (I Jn. 2:25)

John DeBerry
Ronnie Hayes
Randy Kea
Victor Eskew
Keith Mosher, Sr.
Jeff Jenkins
Daniel P. Phillips
Tommy Hicks
Jim Waldron

Wednesday, October 19

9:00 A.M. Defined in Temperance (Retaining Our Youth)
10:00 A.M. Defined in Conversion (Acts 8)
11:00 A.M. Defined in Patience (Jas. 1:4)
LUNCH
1:00 P.M. Defined in the Peace of God (Phil. 4:6-7)
2:00 P.M. Defined in Contending for the Faith (Jude 3)
3:00 P.M. Defined in Prayer (I Thess. 5:17)
6:30 P.M. Congregational Singing
7:00 P.M. Defined in Being Sober (I Pet. 5:8)
8:00 P.M. Defined in Life in the Son

Bobby Liddell
Cameron Freeman
Mike Hixson
Jason Hilburn
Tony Lawrence
Mike McDaniel
Daniel P. Phillips
B. J. Clarke
Robert R. Taylor, Jr.