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**SAVED AND KEPT
Or
How To Get Saved
And
How To Keep Saved
By
George Asbury McLaughlin**

Author of
Old Wine in New Bottles
Inbred Sin
A Living Sacrifice
A Clean Heart
Commentary on St. Luke
Commentary on St. John

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PREFACE

This little volume is by no means intended to be a theological Work. Nor does it attempt to show the details of the Christian life. The author seeks to point out the principal means by which sincere souls may be saved and keep saved.

It is intended to be a simple, direct exposition of the way of salvation, put in everyday language, with the earnest desire that "he that runneth may read," and that the reader may be helped in reaching the goal, and in finding an abundant entrance into the City of God.

With this single aim we launch this little book, praying that it may be helpful to some soul who seeks to know what God has for him.

The Author

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Chapter 1 LOST! LOST!

"Lost! Lost!" How startling the cry! It is a fearful thing to be lost! What a sickening sensation sweeps over the mind when after wandering for hours seeking to find his way, the traveler discovers that he has been traveling in a circle and is in the very place where he started. Only those who have experienced it know the sensation of such an hour.

"Lost! Lost!" A child is lost. The search begins at once. That little word "lost," stirs up a whole community. Its ringing appeal causes strangers to leave their firesides to search for the loved one of a family they have never even seen. Strong men leave business cares to spend the day and night in search for the lost one. Tender hearted women weep and mothers pray, while multitudes join in the search. Sympathetic hearts beat while one mother's heart is wrung in anguish. What agonies are pent up in that little word, "lost."

"Lost, lost!" A fortune is gone. The labor and frugality of a lifetime are swept away in a day. The grim monsters of penury and starvation stare their intended victim in the face. The man who has thus far borne all the trials of a lifetime undaunted, who has thus far laughed at the storms of life, now bows his head like the oak to the cyclone and goes down with a crash before it. Perhaps reason leaves her throne, or he wanders about like one dazed or stunned by a blow. The agony of lost hopes is carved upon his face. The eye loses its luster and premature old age settles down upon him. All this and more is contained in that word "lost."

Lost! Lost! The soul of man lost! If our spiritual senses were as keen as our physical and mental faculties what would we see and hear in that word, "lost!" A soul created in the image of God! Intended for heaven but consigned to dwell with devils. Lost! A soul banished from God and holy angels! Lost! Lost, and Lost forever unless some kind hand shall interpose! Ah, who on earth knows all that it means to be lost and lost Forever!

Salvation! The word means nothing except that some one is lost or about to be lost. The very word means that it has its opposite. Man does not need salvation unless he is lost. If man is not lost then the crucifixion of Jesus was unnecessary; his sufferings and death were all folly. Christ can not be a Savior unless there is some one who needs to be saved.

How wicked it is to say that God is vindictively determined to punish sinners! The truth is that man is as truly lost now as he will be by and by. God is trying to save him, declaring that He willeth not the death of him that dieth. God is doing all he can to save man, except to compel him against his will. There is no virtue in goodness that is compulsory. God is asking men to renounce their sins, so that He can save them. No lost sinner in hell will ever sue God for false imprisonment.

Impenitent men are pursuing a path that surely leads to hell. God is seeking by every inducement to cause them to turn into the path that leads to heaven. He can not take a man to heaven against his will. The man that goes to hell goes because he prefers the path that leads there, rather than the path that leads to heaven. "Salvation is free" and so is damnation. No one has to have either. It would be awful if they did. These are matters of choice and every soul will get that which he most prefers. They who prefer the way to heaven will walk in it. And they that prefer the way to hell will walk therein. They who are lost become so because they prefer that road. God says he wills not the death of any but that all may come to him and be saved.

The last word of invitation in the word of God is, "Come." Our only business in life then is to know how to get out of our lost condition. In other words to discover **HOW TO GET SAVED AND HOW TO KEEP SAVED.**

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Chapter 2

REALIZE THIS STARTLING FACT

"What must I do to be saved?" was the astonished cry of the jailer of Philippi, at the close of the midnight concert given by Paul and Silas in the city jail. This anxious inquirer was a rough, brutal jailer. A few hours before he had whipped these very men and consigned them to the punishment of the stocks. But now he asks them in tones of anguish, this tremendous question. What a change had come over this wicked man!

What had so changed his nature as to cause this man to cry for mercy, who himself had shown no mercy? How did he know that he needed to be saved? Paul and Silas had said nothing to him about salvation. The jailer was under conviction. The Holy Spirit had been preaching to him and convincing him of sin and of his lost condition. His fear was about his soul. It was not fear of losing his prisoners for they were all there. He was not afraid of losing his life for the earthquake was past. He had come into the presence of the eternal, invisible world. He had come to believe that he was not ready for an exchange of worlds. He realized that there was some connection between the praying and praising of his prisoners that night and the God who rules the world. God has set up in every man's breast, his judgment seat -- the conscience. Every man on this earth knows that he is a sinner. No one has to tell him this. It is the universal consciousness of the race. This feeling is the cause of the different kinds of religion of the whole world.

To answer this question and appease an accusing conscience all sorts of religious ceremonies have been invented. Pilgrimages over sandy, burning deserts, washing in sacred rivers, bodily tortures, penances, erection of costly shrines and temples, the invention of beautiful forms of worship, prostration before blocks of wood and stone, the worship of beast, bird and reptiles are all in evidence that man feels himself a sinner and seeks in some way to save himself from the consequences of his sins.

This cry of the soul is often stifled but the providence of God frequently awakens the guilty conscience of man and it cries out for salvation.

When the earthquake shook the City of Charleston some years ago, men cried for mercy in every direction. It was unnecessary to ring any church bell to summon men to pray that night. They cried to God for mercy in every direction. The jailer at Philippi was in just this condition. He felt that he had come into the presence of God. He realized that these prisoners had something to do with it too.

If man were not a sinner he would be full of praise at such an hour when he beheld proofs of his Heavenly Father's power and presence. This sense of the invisible eternal world is what causes the sailor to pray in the storm and the soldier to pray as he goes into battle. Thousands attempt to sneer at religion when in health and strength, who pray in the time of danger.

Reader, you know you are a sinner, but must you wait until the hour of danger, or death, to acknowledge it?

You may say, as some foolish persons have said, "I want an earthquake conversion, like that of the jailer." Yes, but the Holy Spirit has given you opportunities and light that the jailer never had. He will not take an earthquake to arouse a person who already sees his duty. So do not expect it. God converted Lydia in the same city a few days before. Her conversion was entirely different as far as the outward manifestations were concerned. It says, "whose heart the Lord opened." It was the same work as when he converted the jailer. All conversion is the same. But the manifestations were different in each case. It was as real in her case as in that of the jailer.

God has given you light, suited to your need, just as he did to the jailer and Lydia. There is to be a greater earthquake later when unsaved men shall call for the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of the judge of all the earth. If you wait for an earthquake, you may have to wait for the earthquake of the last day and it will be too late. Are you waiting for that?

The jailer came to a sense of his personal responsibility. Many seek to hide behind someone else. They hold up the faults of others as a shield for their own disobedience to God. Because some one else has been untrue, they make it an excuse for neglect in their own salvation. Such people usually seek out some poor, scrawny member of the flock of Christ and hold him up as an excuse for going to hell themselves. They never hold up the best Christians, for such are a condemnation to them. How foolish! Is it a good excuse for refusing to take the remedy, because some one else only pretended to take it?

Would it be fair to go to your neighbor's apple barrel and pick out the rotten ones and judge the whole lot by them? Are all hypocrites, because some are? Is all money counterfeit because some of it is? Is it a good excuse for not doing any business because some have proved rascals in business and others have failed? Will it help the sick man to refuse to take the medicine because some have pretended to have taken it, who did not? How foolishly people act in the matter of religion. They would not act that way in the ordinary affairs of life. We have never forgot the couplet that we learned when a boy, which reads thus:

"Dare to be right! Dare to be true!
Other men's failings will never save you."

Some years ago we were conducting a social service at a camp-meeting. A stranger arose and told us that he had become a Christian after resisting for many years. The excuse he had all these years was, he had been living on the failings of others. We innocently replied, "That is poor food."

"Yes," was his reply, "I was a poor fool."

The man arose soon after, very hastily and left the room. The next day we were accused of calling him a fool. We met him and learned that he understood that we had called him a fool publicly. We explained to him that we said that he was living on poor food. His own conscience had made the application quite correctly. Is there not much truth in this after all? Is it not a foolish thing for a judgment bound soul to miss his opportunity of salvation by this unreasonable excuse? If

you are lost, no one will be responsible except yourself. Every lost soul is a suicide. Every man that is lost might have been saved if he would. Remember the last invitation of the Bible is, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

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Chapter 3 ABANDONMENT OF SIN

Every one who really wants to be a Christian has to face a very important question at the very start. This question is whether he wants to be a Bible Christian or merely a church member, like many around him. He will find church members by the thousands but not so many real Christians.

There are two kinds of church members today. One kind are like the captains of small fishing smacks who used to sail by landmarks along the coast of Maine. They were ignorant of the rules of navigation and so had to keep in sight of the shore and steer by that. There are many in the church who are sailing by landmarks. They do as other people do and say and think as other people.

But there is another kind of Christians who go by the Chart -- the Bible. They go by the rules of spiritual navigation. They want to know what God requires and when they know that, they do it, no matter whether any one else does or not. Which will you be? It does not pay either for this world or the other to get any thing except a Bible salvation. God has made all the arrangements for you to be a real Christian and if you so desire, no one can keep you from so being. But if you simply desire to be a church member, you may be that and make your bed in Hell at last. If you only want to be a formal church member, it will do you no good to read this book, for this book is not written for that purpose.

The first step towards being a Christian and being saved is called in Bible terms, REPENTANCE. We shall not attempt to use any theological terms or statements, but state the matter simply.

Some years ago we were traveling in the Eastern part of the United States, one dark night. The conductor came along to take up the tickets. As he paused, across the aisle from us, we heard him say to two ladies, "Why you should have gotten off at Lawrence. You are going way down East."

The night was dark. The country was a strange one. They were in dismay and like the jailer said, "What must we do?" This is just what every awakened soul feels like saying as he sees that he is lost.

The reply was, "There is another train coming along very soon in the opposite direction. You can get off and take that at the next station."

They did so. That was repentance. This incident well illustrates true and false repentance.

1. Repentance is more than change of mind. Some would have us believe, that is all there is to true repentance. These ladies had changed their minds as to the road as soon as the conductor told them they were wrong. Up to this time they felt that they were all right. But when proper authority announced that they were wrong they were in dismay. They changed their minds as to the way they were in. But after that they felt badly. They were on the wrong road just as much after they felt bad about it, as before. So when a man sees his condition in the light of God's Spirit, he is no more on the right road than he was before, but he now realizes it. The Holy Spirit is the conductor to tell us when we are wrong, if he can only get our attention so that we hear. He is faithful to tell us just where we are, if we will listen.

This is what the prodigal did. When he was among the swine he "came to himself." He changed his mind. But repentance is all this and more. Judas repented as far as acknowledging and throwing down the thirty pieces of silver. He changed his mind but that was not the whole of repentance. The ladies on the train saw that they were wrong, but they were still going down East, and might have continued right on.

The prodigal did more than change his mind. He got up and left the whole company of swine and started for home. The ladies got off the wrong train and took the one that carried them back to the proper destination. This was repentance. We have known of men who have changed their minds as to the truth of Christianity and accepted it as the true religion, who did not repent and get real salvation. Sometimes we hear an experience told something like this, "There came a day when I accepted the truth and stood up and joined the church." The person might have done all that and not have repented at all. To change our mind but not our lives is only to keep on the wrong train and farther away from God and heaven.

Men may have correct creeds and argue for them and not do any repenting. While repentance is a change of mind. This is only the beginning of repentance.

2. Repentance is more than sorrow for sin. The ladies in the train felt sorry to think that they were going down East, but this did not stop the train, nor cause them to get off. They might have cried all night and yet they would have continued going down East. You may feel badly to think you are on the way to Hell but tears will not get you off the train. You may shed enough tears to make a flood but that flood will never bear you on its bosom to heaven.

Judas was sorry that he betrayed his Lord, but he went to his "own place" just the same. With all his sorrow Jesus said, "It were better for that man if he had never been born."

There are many in the penitentiary who are sorry they committed the crime, that brought them there, but if they were out of prison and had the opportunity to commit it again and were sure they would not be found out they would do it again. "Judge," said the criminal, "if I had felt before I did it, as I do now I would not have done it." He simply felt bad that he was caught in his crime.

We would by no means imply that tears are out of place. Usually they are a good sign when a person is seeking pardon. The man who has defied the law of God and has been living for self, instead of for God and heaven ought to feel badly. If he does not, he is not genuinely penitent. We

do not say that he will necessarily shed tears, but he will sorrow to think that he has rebelled against the good God; his sins will be a source of sorrow to him. He would blot out the part if he could. And yet he may have a very tender set of feelings and not fully repent. It is a sad case when people go as far as this and even weep over sin but keep right along as before. With them tears are only salt water and they soon evaporate.

3. Repentance is more than the discovery of the evil of sin. The ladies in the cars made the discovery that they were wrong and in a serious dilemma. But still they were going down East until they got off the train. They could have sat there and realized and discussed their sad condition but that would have done no good. A full realization of the case did not save them from it. They must get off the train. The sinner may have a full realization of his lost condition and the awful nature of sin and yet be no better, if he remains there. He will see how heinous is sin in the sight of God and the awful nature of the consequences of sin but that will not save him.

Solomon says, "Fools make a mock of sin." Some see their sins but jest about it. But the man who truly repents feels all this and more. He has a determination to quit sins. He has done wrong towards the God who loves him. David said, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." And yet repentance is not complete even with this deep sense of sin.

4. Repentance is more than confession of sin. To be sure confession of sin is a part of repentance, but a man may confess his sad condition and yet continue a sinner.

The ladies we referred to might have informed every one on the train that they were going down East and that alone would not have helped the matter, although it might have helped to get information and advice as to how to get light, yet of itself alone it would have amounted to but little. The prodigal confessed his sad condition when he said, "I perish with hunger." He would have perished as truly if he had done no more than confess it.

Pharaoh confessed ten times, "I have sinned," but kept on sinning. This was not repentance. Balaam said, "I have sinned," but he did not repent. Saul, the disobedient king, said, "I have sinned," but he died a sinner. Judas said, "I have sinned," but he died a guilty suicide just the same.

5. Repentance is more than restitution. It is all that and more. Zacchaeus said, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore unto him fourfold." God gave as one of the requirements of reconciliation with him under the old dispensation, that the wicked must "restore the pledge." We must make every thing right as far as we can with our fellow-beings.

A man on the border of our country became convicted of sin. He not only changed his mind, and felt godly sorrow for his sin but he went to the authorities and said, "I have wronged the United States government of a large sum of money. The house I live in was bought by the money I gained by smuggling. I can not longer live in a house that is not mine." He turned the house over to the government and all that he had and went to prison. After a time an appeal was made by influential men to the President of the United States and the President said, "Such a man as that is a safe man to turn loose," and he set him free.

There are many who have sought salvation and have never found it, just because they were not willing to make things right with their fellow-men. Jesus said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled with thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." Repentance must be first towards God and then towards men.

But some one says, "What if I am not able to restore or repair the injury that I have done?" Then do the best you can under the circumstances. If you are unable to make restoration show at least willingness. Do not let this be an excuse for not doing the best you can. If the friend will then not be reconciled, you have done all that you can, and God will bless it. It is better to stand unfavorably with men than with God.

He has the power to destroy or save and men have not. Do as the prodigal did. He had squandered all. He could do nothing but confess to his father.

6. But we may do all this and yet repentance may not be complete. One thing more remains (we have already mentioned it) and that is abandonment of sin. The command of the word of God is, "Let the wicked forsake his way," and lest the moral man might have an opportunity to excuse himself, by saying, "I am not wicked, I have defrauded no one. I have kept the commandments," God goes on to say, "and the unrighteous man his thoughts." There is a thought life that goes on in the soul that may be very far away from God that needs abandonment. The purposes and motives may be in rebellion against God.

This abandonment of sin is to be total. "Break off your sins by righteousness," is the command. Not taper them off; nor leave off one today and another tomorrow, etc., but break them short off. "Cease to do evil," is the divine command. If the gates of a city are ever so well defended with one exception, the enemy can get in just as well as if there were no defense. We must abandon all sin or fail entirely in our repentance. This is the reason so many have failed.

We have known of men who came to God, asking him to save them from one sin who felt competent to save themselves from all the rest. We have for instance known men to seek God to save them from the appetite of strong drink, who seemed to suppose that was all they needed to be saved from. Hence they did not quit sins that were just as bad in the sight of God as drinking. They only reformed from one sin and that for a short time usually. Repentance is more than reformation.

The ladies might have commenced to walk towards the rear of the train and although going that way in one sense they were still going down East. So is it with mere reformation. It is not getting off the train but trying to stay on with our faces pointed the other way. Repentance gets off the wrong train and gets onto the right train and goes the other way

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Chapter 4 FAITH

There is perhaps no topic about which more is said than faith. There are many misty notions concerning it. We wish therefore to make it as simple as possible.

1. Faith in God for salvation comes just as faith comes in any one else. We are so constituted that we must believe when we have proper evidence. Not to do so when we have good evidence is to do violence to the laws of our being. The apostle says, "faith cometh by hearing."

When the conductor told the ladies that they could leave the train at the next station and take another, they acted upon it with implicit faith, because they believed what he said. They knew it was his business to be informed on such matters and that he could be trusted in what he said in that matter.

They did not sit down and begin to lament that they had so little faith in what he said. They did not say, "O I wish I could believe."

That is the way many professed Christians talk when asked to believe God. They say, "O I have so little faith!" In other words they do not believe what God has said. They make him a liar when he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." They say, "O I have so little faith." Who is it you have so little faith in? Is it God?

When such a person is reined up by this question, they often reply, "I have so little faith in myself." Well that is the key to the difficulty. They have really been trying to have faith in themselves and can not have much and none that will save them. They had better stop trying to make God a liar. Usually they do have more faith in themselves than in God. If they had still less in themselves they would stop insulting God and believe Him.

We believe men when they tell us facts but we doubt God when he tells us facts. We can trust a man who makes us promises but we doubt the true and faithful God when he makes promises. We can trust a bank because we believe it is good but we can not trust God. Is it then any thing else than impudence to doubt God and say His credit is not good?

We read in the word of God that "without faith it is impossible to please God." The men who will be longest remembered in the world have been the men who believed God implicitly. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and see.

Faith is accepting what God says as true and acting accordingly. The ladies on the train accepted what the conductor said and acted accordingly. When the ten lepers came to Jesus and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us," he said, "go show yourselves to the priests." That was what men did who believed they were cured of leprosy. This had been ordained by the law of Moses. The priest was to make an examination and pronounce on the case. When Jesus said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests," they acted just as if they were healed, and as they went they were healed. Trust God the same way. Repent truly of your sins. Trust God to forgive and save you and then go out and act as if you really believed it and you will find it so.

So in order to have this salvation, believe what the witnesses say who have been saved and then go and act as if you believed God.

Still farther, faith, that brings salvation, is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus styled himself the "Great Physician." If we go to him as we would to a physician and give ourselves up to obey his directions as we would a doctor's we shall receive this salvation. Now there is a difference between believing a physician, believing in a physician and believing on a physician.

For instance a new doctor comes to town. You are sick. You form a personal acquaintance with him and find him to be a fine Christian gentleman.

You become so intimate with him, as your acquaintance ripens, that you have implicit confidence in all his statements. You feel that you can rely upon his word. He tells you many things about his practice in other places and of the patients he has cured. You believe every word he says, but that does not cure you. The disease is just as deadly as before. Your belief in him does not save you, and yet it is a kind of faith.

This is the kind of faith in Jesus that does not save men. There are many who believe that Jesus was a truth teller but they are not saved notwithstanding they believe he spake as man never spake. There are others who go farther and believe that Jesus is divine and yet that faith does not save them. They read the Bible and believe every word in it and still they are lost. They believe in Jesus, in his divinity and power to save, in all that he says; but do not believe on him.

But you may go farther and believe all the doctor says and in addition you may be shown the diplomas that he has hung up in his office showing that he is a graduate of several medical colleges. He may then show you the testimonials of his patients who have been saved from the most deadly forms of the same disease that you are suffering from, but all that kind of faith does not save. No matter how much faith you may have in his skill, if that is all, that faith will not save you from the disease.

If you expect that just your faith in his skill would save you it would show that your disease had affected your brain. And the disease of sin has affected some people's common sense, so that they think their faith of the head is going to save them. Such people think they are saved. What a delusion!

Some churches simply require a seeker of salvation to say that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God and be baptized. Then they tell them that they are saved. Awful delusion! If this be true then the devils were fit subjects for baptism for they confessed that Jesus was the Christ. "Thou believest there is one God," says St. James, "thou doest well. The devils believe and tremble." But they are devils still in spite of their belief.

This is not the faith that brings salvation. They are devils still. All this is believing Jesus and believing in Jesus, but it is not believing on Jesus. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said Paul to the jailor, "and thou shalt be saved."

It remains then to be seen what believing on Jesus means. Having your faith fully established as to the veracity and skill of the doctor, you must now go a step farther, if you expect to be cured, and that step is to submit yourself to him for treatment. You surrender yourself to him and let him take the responsibility of the cure. You take the medicine according to orders. You diet as he says. You submit to the anesthetic and the knife. You go to the health resort as he directs. You put yourself in his care and give over trying to cure yourself. This is believing on the physician.

In like manner we must believe on Jesus Christ. We must submit ourselves to treatment. We must receive him to save us and banish all other hope of salvation from any other source. Faith then is receiving Jesus as our Savior with a determination to do his bidding. We have been trying to run the ship for many years in vain and have nearly wrecked it and now we are to receive him on board and let him run it to suit himself, while we obey his orders.

Or to return to the illustration of the physician, we now take the medicine of repentance just as he directs. We now forsake sin as he bids us in his word. We now do as he bids and trust him for salvation and go forth and act as if we believed he had saved us. This is believing on Jesus, viz., trusting him and then going forth and acting as if we believed it.

Reader, have you done likewise, honestly, determinedly? Then you have learned already more on this subject than this little book can teach you. If you have not done it why not begin at once?

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Chapter 5

WE MAY KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED

It was said of John The Baptist that he should "give the knowledge of Salvation" to the people of God "by the remission of their sins." John was the last prophet of the old dispensation. This was the privilege of those under the old dispensation -- to know that they were saved. Much more then is it the privilege of those who live under the new dispensation.

We may know we are saved today as truly and as really as we know that we live and are in health. Under the dispensation in which we live the word of God tells us, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16.) And again Paul says to the Galatians, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son in your hearts crying Abba, Father." (Gal. 4:6.)

This is the Bible doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. This is something not only to be desired but most important and necessary to a victorious Christian life. No one who has been seeking Christ ought to rest until he has the Witness of the Spirit to the fact that he is a child of God -- that all his sins are forgiven.

Nevertheless, there are some good people who in their anxiety to be thorough make mistakes as to what this witness is. We hear them saying, "I have repented and believed, but I have not the witness."

1. The witness of the Spirit is not an inference. There is a class of people who are teaching that the knowledge of salvation is all a matter of inference, deduced from certain scriptures. They are accustomed to say to a seeking soul, "Do you believe that Jesus is divine?" If an affirmative reply is given they then open their Bibles and point to the passage, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Do you see that passage?" "Yes." "Well, then, just believe you are a Christian and you are one, for is not the Bible true?"

But a man may say all this and only believe with his head and not have that real heart faith that saves. This is the trouble with much of latter day Christianity. It knows nothing about real salvation but has only inferred it, from certain passages of scripture. We may as we said in the last chapter, believe in the physician but fail to take his medicine, and hence not get saved. Believing a time table will not take a traveler to his destination if he does nothing more. We have no right to say that we have arrived at the destination simply because we have believed in the time table. We have no right to say we are at the station of salvation until we know it and can see the word, SALVATION, on the depot. Believing a doctor is not the same as knowing you are cured. When a man is cured he will feel it in his system. Some of the most ungodly people have gone all through the motions of this reasoning and are no better but often made worse. Inference is not knowledge.

The Holy Spirit is not an influence as Jesus has told us in John 16th chapter. He is a person. And as a person it is his office and business to tell us that we belong to God. And this is a very important matter. Salvation is too great a matter to be left in uncertainty. It is too big an affair for a man to have on hand and not know it. It makes too great a change in the life to be an unconscious experience.

1. The Witness of The Spirit is Not an Ecstasy or Emotion. Here is where many are befogged. They say, "I have not yet received the Witness," when they are looking for something they hardly know what. They expect great raptures, or a wonderful appearance of great light or ravishing emotions. These are not the witness of the Spirit. To be sure they may accompany it or they may not. They are not the essential thing.

Consequently there are many people who will not believe God until they have an experience of that kind. And such people never get it. For they have presumed to dictate to God just how he must do with them and he will not accept dictation. Hence we often see people who have trusted in their feelings more than they have trusted in God. Salvation with them is not a matter of trusting God but of trusting their feelings. They want God to bless them and then they will trust him. They want God to witness to the fact that they are saved and then they will believe. They want him to witness to a thing that is not true and then they will believe it.

But the spirit never witnesses to any thing until it is a fact. We may have the witness of the Spirit with a great many demonstrations, or we may have it with none. But most people want fire works more than they want to hear the still small voice of the Spirit.

They want a regular Fourth of July experience with all of the outburst and spectacular show. Here is where many get stopped and get no farther.

2. The witness of the Spirit is an inward persuasion that the work is done. This persuasion is wrought by the Holy Spirit. It may have more or less emotion with it according to the temperament or education, or manner of life of the person.

How may we know it when we have it? In the same way that we know other things. We may know it as really as we know that we are alive. Is this mysterious? Who does not know that he exists? But who can explain how he knows it? When the scholar who has puzzled over a knotty problem solves it, he feels a secret satisfaction and an assurance that he can not explain but it is as real as if he could.

3. The witness of the Spirit like all the phenomena of the soul can not be explained. This is the white stone which Jesus said he would give with the "new name written which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it." Just as no man can tell another what the sensation of electricity is, save he that receiveth it, even so can no man tell another what the witness of the Spirit is. Thus faith becomes "the evidence of things not seen." This is the reason so many have failed who have attempted to explain the witness of the Spirit and make it harmonious with human philosophy. This is the reason some have tried to make it appear to be only believing a passage of scripture. They have had no experience in the matter and so have attempted to make it harmonize with their lack of experience.

Persevere then until God tells you that you are saved and that your sins are forgiven. If you seek you shall find. Do not let someone else tell you that you are saved. Never give up the search until you have that divine inward persuasion that you are saved.

If you have not yet obtained, carefully go over the ground and see if your abandonment of sin was really genuine.

Perhaps you are keeping back something. Go before God daily and tell him that you are really in earnest and that you will be his, at the cost of a right hand, or right eye. Tell Him that you are trusting him to save you now and that you will so continue and never give over until you know that you are saved. Such an earnest, honest business transaction with God is sure to bring the desired boon.

Remember if you do not know you are saved, then it is because you are not saved.*
Resolve never to stop seeking until you know:

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear.
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear,
With confidence I now draw nigh
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

*[PLEASE NOTE: It is possible for one to know in his heart that he is a child of God, and the same time, to be beset in his mind with temptations to doubt. Jesus knew in his heart that He was the Son of God, and yet, while He had that heart knowledge, Satan injected a thought of doubt

into His mind with the words, "IF Thou be the Son of God." His mental temptation of "doubt" did not affect His "knowledge" in His heart that He was the Son of God! I suggest that McLaughlin's statement above: "If you do not know you are saved, then it is because you are not saved," should be spoken with some caution, and, at least to some, be qualified to say "if you do not know (in your heart) ... etc." For some genuinely saved individuals, when beset by a Satanic accusation of doubt, may thereby conclude that having a such a mental doubt means that they did not "know" they were saved, and therefore are not saved. And, when Satan thus tricks a hyper-conscientious child of God, the result can be a sad casting away of that Christian's confidence and a pitiful plunge into mental darkness, bewilderment, discouragement, and spiritual defeat. --DVM]

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Chapter 6 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

None of us will ever regret on our death bed that we prayed too much. But many of us will regret that we have not prayed more. Prayer is one of the sweetest of all the Christian experiences and yet how few are adepts at it. Prayer is to the soul what the breath is to the body. No Christian life can be sustained without much prayer. The word of God does not tell us to work without ceasing but it does command us to "pray without ceasing." The former we could not always do but the latter we can.

The Christian is like the diver who goes down beneath the waves. He is able to remain there because of the pipe which conveys the air to him from the world above. So we can live down in this world of sin if we keep up the prayer communication which brings down the atmospheres of heaven to our souls. We might just as well understand it now that we can not maintain a Christian life without much prayer.

We know that there are people who are skeptical as to receiving answers to their prayers but it is because they never heard from heaven. But every Christian has. Others may not believe that God answers prayer but he knows it.

Thirty years ago, if any one had told us that there was such a thing as the telephone, we would not have believed it.

Who would have believed at that time that by talking into an aperture in a box fastened to the side of the wall we could convey our meaning to those at a distance, who could also hear our voice plainly? To have maintained that, would have made us fit candidates for the asylum. But God's people have been talking without any instrument or electric battery straight into the ear of God for centuries. And they have been receiving answers too. And it is no more superstition to talk with God and get answers than to talk into the telephone and receive replies from earthly friends. More than that, there has just been invented a process whereby it is possible to talk without wires. Wireless telegraphy has been proved to be a fact. But God's people have been sending their messages to heaven without wires for six thousand years. It is no more unreasonable to affirm that God hears and answers prayer than to affirm that people make requests and get answers by telephone every day.

To be sure a man may affirm that he has never had any answers to his prayers. But so may any one say who has never had an answer by telephone. Either he has been talking to a person who will not hear him or he has not been talking the right way. Many pray to God who get no answer because he will answer only certain people, and they, only as they come in the right way. God will not hear the prayers of sinners at all except they are penitent. He will hear only their prayer of repentance.

God nowhere in the Bible teaches or commands man to pray. It is not necessary for man will pray. It is an instinct of his soul. He commands the times when we should pray. "Men ought always to pray," "Pray without ceasing." He tells where men should pray, "I will that men pray everywhere." He tells how to pray, "Without wrath or doubting." He encourages to pray, saying "ask and ye shall receive." But he does not absolutely command prayer, because it is natural for man to pray at certain times as it is to breathe. Men pray in times of great emergency, however much they may ridicule the idea of prayer when they are in favorable circumstances.

We have already referred to the earthquake which shook Charleston, S. C., some years ago. Men prayed that night everywhere, all through the city. There was no need of ringing the church bells that night to call men to prayer meeting. Amid the darkness and the awful sensations of the earthquake, the voice of prayer was heard everywhere. The whole city became a prayer meeting. Man will pray but the trouble is, he often prays at the wrong time when it is too late. Young converts have a stated time to pray! Pray, as God tells you to do. If you do not pray according to directions your prayer will do no good. You can not retain a Christian experience unless you are much given to prayer. We have not space to write a treatise here on prayer, but there is more in the doctrine of prayer than the majority of Christian professors have any idea of. Many books have been written on this subject but it has never been exhausted.

Every one who attempts to lead a life of prayer will find many hindrances, but we must persevere in spite of them all. We advise our readers to get some good book on the subject and study the subject thoroughly. Andrew Murray's book entitled "With Christ in The School of Prayer," ought to be the property of every Christian. Remember at the start that if you wish to be a real Christian and not the shoddy kind, you must be a man or woman of much prayer. Jesus while on earth was a man, not only of sorrows but of much prayer. He spent whole nights in prayer. If Jesus could not get along without a great deal of prayer you certainly need to pray a great deal to preserve the bloom of the spiritual beauty of your experience. Pray without ceasing! Pray!

We are just now discussing the most vital point of your Christian life. Here is the turning point which will determine whether you are to be an eminent Christian or a sinning and repenting professor of religion. Here is where you are to be a great success or a failure as a Christian. Which shall it be? No one can settle this matter for you. With the most sincere solicitude for those who shall read these pages, we send them forth, praying that whoever reads them may resolve that he or she will be a man or woman of much prayer. You can not be eloquent perhaps. You can not be educated possibly. You may have few gifts or talents but you can be a man of much prayer and nothing can prevent that. We give a few simple rules right here:

1. Take your Bible and a concordance and see how much prominence is given to prayer and how much is promised to those who pray aright.

2. Have stated seasons for secret prayer. Christ declared that those who go into their closets and pray in secret shall be rewarded openly. We have read of the soldier who used to retire alone daily in the forest to pray in secret. The colonel had some one follow him to see what he was about. He was finally accused of going out there to betray the secrets of the army to the enemy. In vain he protested that this accusation was untrue and that he had simply retired to pray, but he was condemned to be shot on suspicion of being a traitor. He was told that he had only so many minutes to live. The soldier then asked for a little time to pray. The request was granted and he prayed with great fervor. The colonel was much moved and said that his life would be spared, for, said he, "no man can drill like that in public who has not practiced much in private." His public praying showed that he was accustomed to private prayer. Those who are weak in public prayer are so because they are weak in private prayer. Have a place and time for prayer!

3. Tell God all about all the things that concern you. No matter however little they may appear to you. No one can really tell how big some of the little things are. Nothing is too small to interest the God of grace if it concerns those whom he loves. He has numbered all the hairs of your head. He who tells all the little things to God comes to feel that God is interested in all his life. If we could all feel that God was with us in the little affairs of life, how differently we might live!

4. Pray aloud if possible in your secret prayer. Get accustomed to the sound of your own voice in prayer. Talk to him as you would to any trusted friend. This will be found to be a great help.

5. Do not feel that you have got to pray so long or it will not be worth while. Pray until you pray through. Pray until your heart is all unburdened. Make it a reality and when you have no more to ask, then quit until the next time.

6. Have definite requests. Take some one on your heart to God as a subject of prayer. God has seen fit to save this world through the prayers of others. We doubt if any one was ever saved except as some one prayed for that soul. Have a list of people for whom to pray daily until you see them converted.

7. Pray without ceasing. But how can I? Very easily. You can send up telegrams even when you are not on your knees. Do as Nehemiah did. When the king asked him why he was so sorrowful and he replied that it was because of the state of his native land, he says that right in the midst of his talk to the king he lifted up his heart to God in prayer. He sent up a telegram. "So I prayed to the God in heaven," he says. You can have a prayerful attitude of soul even amidst a multitude of things that would distract. We close this chapter with an extract which we think right to the point here:

"A number of ministers were assembled for the discussion of difficult questions; and among others it was asked how the command to pray without ceasing could be carried out. Various suppositions were started; at last one of the number was appointed to write an essay on the subject and to read it at the next meeting; which being overheard by a female servant, she exclaimed, '

What, a whole month waiting to tell the meaning of that text? It is one of the easiest and best texts in the Bible.' ' Well, well,' said an old minister; 'Mary, what can you say about it? Let us know how you understand it. Can you pray all the time?'

"O yes, sir --"

" ' What, when you have so many things to do?'

" ' Why, sir; the more I have to do, the more I can pray.'

" ' Indeed! Well Mary, do let us know how it is; for most people think otherwise.'

" ' Well, sir;' said the girl, 'when I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray 'Lord open the eyes of my understanding;' and when I am dressing, I pray that I may be clothed with the robes of righteousness; and when I have washed me I ask for the washing of regeneration; and as I begin to work, I pray that I may have strength equal to my day; when I begin to kindle the fire, I pray that God's work may revive in my heart and when I sweep out the house, I pray that my heart may be cleansed from all impurities; and while preparing and partaking of breakfast, I desire to be fed with the hidden manna and the sincere milk of the word! And as I am busy with the little children, I look up to God as my father, and pray for the spirit of adoption, that I may be his child; and so on all day. Everything that I do furnishes me with a thought for prayer.'

" ' Enough,' cried the divine, 'these things are revealed to babes and often hidden from the wise and prudent. Go on, Mary, said he, 'pray without ceasing; and as for my brethren here let us bless the Lord for this exposition and remember that he has said, "the meek shall he guide in judgment.' "

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Chapter 7 STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES

One of the evidences that we are saved is a love for the Bible. An infidel once said that he had no confidence in the sincerity of certain converts because there was dust on their Bibles. The Bible is our guide book, our book of directions, telling us how to get to heaven. He who loves the way will surely love the book that tells about the way.

We make no apology for the Bible. We make no defense of it, for it is able to defend itself. This it has done all through the ages. Wicked men have attempted to suppress it and remove it from society, but it has a greater hold upon the world than ever. There is no new argument that can be brought against it. As some one says, this is the anvil that has worn out thousands of hammers of unbelief and skepticism. But it is as sound as ever. All it needs in any generation is men and women who will preach its precepts and live its principles.

This is the book that the best men and women have squared their lives by and have had underneath their dying pillow. No book has ever been wept and rejoiced over as this book.

Said Daniel Webster, who was undoubtedly the greatest statesman that America ever produced, "From the time that at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the scriptures."

John Quincy Adams, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the great statesman of that period, said, "I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible every year. My custom is to read through four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me to be the most suitable manner of beginning the day."

When Sir Walter Scott, the greatest writer of Scotland, was on his death bed, he requested his son-in-law to read to him.

"From what book shall I read?" said he.

"And you ask?" said Scott. "There is but one book." "I chose," said his son-in-law, John 14. He listened with mild devotion, and said, when I had done, 'Well, this is a great comfort.' "

We quote these instances and had we space might quote from hundreds of the world's great minds to show how much they felt that they owed to the Bible. We do this to put emphasis on this truth, that none of us can afford to slight our Bibles if we wish to be strong Christians.

Will we resolve this day as we read these lines that we will be real Bible students! John Wesley said he owed his success to the fact that he resolved to be "a man of one book" -- the Bible. We dwell upon this point, praying as we pen these lines that all our readers may resolve by the help of God, that they will be no ordinary students of the Bible.

1. Not only ought every Christian to have a Bible that is his own, but he ought to have a good one. Cheap editions may do to distribute among the poor but every one ought to show how much they prize the Bible by having a good one. Men of the world have their costly editions of books that do not do them one whit of spiritual good.

A man that can live in a costly house and wear fine clothing and fare sumptuously every day and be satisfied to own only a cheap edition of the word of God, with fine, dingy print, shows that he takes more delight in the things that minister to the comfort of the body rather than of the soul. We know by the investment of our money, what we have most confidence in, and prize the most.

2. Commit whole chapters of the Bible to memory. Why not? "O my memory is so poor. It is difficult for me to recall what I have seen and heard." That is just the reason then that you ought to cultivate it. And there is nothing better to practice on than the Bible. We believe God helps some people whom we know, in recalling scripture. , If we can remember any thing easily, it is the things we are most interested in. There are plenty of people who can not remember scripture but

have no difficulty in remembering the prices of the market, no matter how often they change. They have no trouble about recalling current news of the gossip of the neighborhood.

It is because they are interested along these lines. Secret societies often require members to memorize their whole ritual and they do it too. But why commit to memory whole chapters? For several good reasons. It stores up the scripture for future use. We have known of people who by misfortune were laid aside from active life who found that their fund of scripture, learned when in prosperity, was a constant feast of soul.

It was so safely hid in the treasure house of memory that it became a daily delight.

But there is a fascination in the very utterances of the word of God. Very much good can be done if we are not gifted in talk, by the recitation of scripture. We have known of preachers who were not eloquent but the quotation of much scripture in their sermons awakened great interest. People like to hear the word of God and God blesses it when quoted. We once told a young man who felt that he was called to preach but had little opportunity to study that if it were our case we would commit whole chapters of the Bible and give them to the people in a regular broadside, for we knew if we could think of but little to say of our own thought, God would bless His word.

3. Make your Bible a history of your experience. By this we mean mark the passages that you have got special light upon by some one's preaching or testimony. Put down the date and the person's name who preached from the text marked or in any way gave you a new view of the truth therein; mark the passages that you have proved. After a few months your Bible will be very suggestive as you come to these places. This will make your Bible a register of your advancing growth in grace.

4. Study a book at a time. Any good commentary will tell you why each book of the Bible was written and its main object and the circumstances that surrounded its origin. No one can rightly understand the Bible who does not understand these things. To many people the Bible is like the dictionary, disjointed and unconnected. They quote passages and apply them in a sense never intended because they do not get the connection and hence fail to get the sense. We have seen people apply scripture who thought their application very bright when it was farthest from right. Be able to have a bird's-eye view of each book when you think of it.

5. Another good way to study the Bible is by topics. Take one subject or word and look it up in the concordance. Then look up the parallel passages. Much can be learned in this way. You may say this is labor. True, but the Bible is a gold mine, more precious than all the Klondike.

If men are willing to labor to get "gold that perisheth," how much ought we to be willing to dig for the gold of God's word, which is able to make us "wise unto salvation." If you want to be a Bible Christian and get to heaven, you must know the Bible.

6. Read a portion of the word of God before you begin the day. Many read it at night. This is well but if we can read it only once the first thing in the day is the better time. In the morning we read it to have something to meditate upon through the day. In the evening we should read it, if at

all, to quiet and soothe our spirits, which may have been harassed and disturbed by the trials of the day. It is a good thing to hem in both edges of the day by prayer and the word of God.

7. It is quite profitable to study the Bible upon your knees, asking God to open it to your spiritual understanding.

Many people rush to the commentators first and find out what they say. This is the extent of their Bible study. It is better to go to the author first and see what he says. Ask Him who inspired it to open your eyes that you may behold wondrous things out of his law. Whatever is in the commentaries is what God has showed good men. Ask him to show you what lessons he has for you and then compare them with what he showed others in their commentaries. This is the best use for commentaries.

Resolve at any cost to be a Bible Christian and thus you will be a strong Christian and get to heaven with an abundant entrance. Weak Christians get along at a poor limping rate in this world and get a low seat in heaven and a starless crown. Some are "saved as by fire" so we read. Make up your mind that you will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

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Chapter 8

LIVING FOR OTHERS

Every young Christian will usually decide by his course within a few months after conversion, whether he will be a strong Christian or whether he will be like the vast majority of professors who amount to nothing.* They live and move and have a being but that is about all. When they die the world does not miss them and would not know they had gone except that there is a little more vacant space.

It is a sad fact and yet this is a fact, that the most of the latter day Christian life does not amount to anything. Young convert, determine that this shall not be the case with you, for it need not be and should not be, for God has opened great possibilities for every one of us.

One great thing that will determine what we are to be, is the attitude we take towards the conversion of others. One of the proofs that we are converted is a desire to see others converted. If we have not this we may well doubt our conversion and ought to see about it at once. If we have this desire for the conversion of others, we ought to be very careful that we do not stifle it, as upon it depends not only the welfare of some with whom we mingle but also our own advancement.

We may have sought God in order to save own souls but now out of gratitude to our Savior and from a feeling of humanity we ought to seek the welfare of others. We shall give some reasons for this.

1. We ought to go out of ourselves and seek the salvation of others for the glory of God. Sinners are breaking the laws of the God that we love and trampling in the dust the honor of our

King. We ought to stand up for his honor and seek to persuade men to honor Him. Every sinner saved adds to the divine glory. While he is in sin, he dishonors God.

2. We are called to the same work as Jesus -- to get men saved. We are called the salt of the world. We are to be the Lord's ambassadors. Jesus went about doing good. So ought all his disciples. This is the only way he has of bringing this world back to God -- through the efforts of His servants. It is a glorious mission. It was just this spirit that caused Jesus to leave the skies. When we have His spirit we shall have the same desire to be a blessing to the world about us. And if we really have his spirit we shall be a blessing to some one. We are lights in the world, but a light is of no use unless it shines in someone's darkness to cheer him and drive the darkness away. There are no drones in God's hive. There are no silent partners in his firm.

The more Christlike we are, the more helpful we will be to others. There is a sad mistake abroad today and that is that only the ministry are responsible for the welfare of souls. We are just as much responsible for the souls of the community according to our ability as the preacher. There are people whom we can reach that the preacher never can reach. We are our brother's keeper. God will hold us responsible as much as any one else for our Christian life and activity.

3. In helping others we are helping our own Christian life. The tree of religious activity is dependent for its growth on its fruitfulness. The farther it extends its boughs and branches over men, giving shade in time of heat and its fruits in time of need, the more it strikes its roots into the soul and drinks deeper of the nourishment of the soil and makes itself stronger. We once heard a bishop say concerning foreign missions, that the question was not, could the heathen get along without us, but could we get along without them. They were a splendid field to exercise the muscles of our benevolence. This is true as regards all Christian effort. Jesus says, "unto him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance." The wise man says, "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty." The man who helps others helps himself.

The people who are all dried up in their Christian experience are the people who are all bound up in themselves.

We read a story many years ago of two men riding in the country on a very cold day. They saw a man lying in the snow perishing from the cold. One of them proposed that they get out and try to save his life. The other objected on the ground that they would freeze themselves as it was very cold. But the heart of the one was so full of pity that he could not endure to see the other die, and he left the sleigh and began to work to rouse the man from the stupor into which he had fallen. After a long time he succeeded in saving the man but what was his horror in returning to the sleigh to find that the man whom he had left in the sleigh was himself frozen. The one man by his exertions had kept himself alive, in saving the other, while his comrade had lost his life by keeping still.

This is a good illustration of the spiritual experience of many. They have kept themselves alive by seeking to save others. While many have perished by their want of love and indifference to others' welfare.

Only the unselfish life is the vigorous life. Those who pray most for others learn how to pray and have power in prayer for themselves. Only the man who is interested in others is happy. No man can be a happy Christian who does not seek to be a blessing to others. The next time you have an opportunity just study the faces of the people and see how happy those people look whom you know are seeking to bless others, and notice the faces of those who are all wrapped up in themselves.

There is as much difference in the looks of the two classes as between the looks of a whirlpool and a fountain, for that is what they each are. Resolve that you will live for others. Ask God to give you a passion for soul-saving, and if you ask aright, He will.

*[PLEASE NOTE: While McLaughlin's basic exhortation in this chapter against spiritual mediocrity is valid and good, this particular statement strikes me as incongruous and a bit hard. He speaks of one who, after a genuine "conversion" becomes part of the "majority of professors who amount to nothing." One who is genuinely converted should not be "lumped together" with "the majority of unregenerate professors" as long as he or she remains a child of God. And, it cannot be truly said of any genuine child of God that he or she "amounts to nothing". Even the "rank and file" in Christ's army have a high value to Him, having been purchased with His precious blood. -- DVM]

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Chapter 9 OUR THREE ENEMIES

The Christian life is a warfare. Those who have not found this to be a fact, thereby show that they have no Christian life. The Bible is a military book. Not only did God's people have to fight with enemies under the old dispensation, but they have spiritual enemies to contend with today -- "not against flesh and blood," says Paul, "but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Consequently there is a military ring about the utterances of the Bible. It speaks of being "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," of "contending earnestly for the faith," of "fighting the good fight of faith" and of "putting on the whole armor of God." This is no imaginary thing. Greater victories and defeats are experienced here, more important than Waterloo or Gettysburg.

Here is decided not the brief history of nations, but the eternal destiny of human souls. We ought then to know who our enemies are and how to vanquish them. These enemies are a trinity. Just as there is a Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so there is an unholy trinity -- the world, the flesh and the devil. These are just as real as any foes that ever attacked our nation.

1. The World. By this is not meant the literal world of earth and sky, of forest, mountain and stream. This was made by God and is for our good. By the term world, the Bible means the unconverted part of humanity, with its spirit, customs, maxims and laws. The spirit of this mass of society is hostile to godliness. We must meet it every day and there must be in us sufficient of the spirit of the heavenly world to overcome it or we shall be overcome by it.

The Bible is constantly throwing out warnings against it, as an enemy that will surely work destruction to us unless we overcome it. "If any man love the world," says St. John, "the love of the Father is not in him." If we love the fashion, frivolity and fun of the world; if we seek happiness in the things of the world it shows that we have not the love of God. For that is sufficient for all the desires of the soul. He who has the love of God in his soul does not need to go to the world for satisfaction. Nor has he any desire to do so. St. John says truly, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Here we learn more particularly what constitutes the spirit of the world, viz: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life."

A genuine conversion puts all this under our feet and gives victory, so that we get our satisfaction not out of the things of the world, but from God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," says St. John. Young converts, the world will seek to have you compromise and go its way, but if you refuse to hear because of your faith in God, and refuse to compromise or allow our spirit to be entangled with the spirit of the world, you will win a greater victory than Alexander or Caesar ever did. Faith in the heavenly world to which you are hastening will conquer the spirit of this "present evil world." The question will soon be settled whether you are to be a victor or a backslider. For as a rule, the way a convert takes hold of religion at the beginning will determine how he will go on.

2. The Flesh. By this term is meant not the physical man -- the body with its appetites and passions -- but that evil disposition of heart, which we are all possessed of by nature, which makes it easy to do wrong and hard to be right. This is called by different names in the word of God. It is not only called the "flesh," but "our old man," "sin that dwelleth in me," "lust," "the carnal mind," etc. It is called depravity, "original sin," etc., by the theologians. Chas. Wesley calls it the "bent to sinning." Every church that has spoken on the subject in its creed has declared that it still exists in a converted man and is a great hindrance in our efforts to serve God and to grow in grace. This is what Paul meant when he said, "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh against the Spirit, so that ye can not (may not, Rev. Ver.) do the things that he would."

This is what discourages so many good people, who fancy that they have peculiar dispositions, and that other people do not have the same difficulty as themselves and that it is easy for other folks to be good, but not for them. Right at this point more people backslide than from any other cause. A man carrying a huge magnet will find it difficult to go by a pile of steel rails. Every converted person sooner or later finds the magnet in his breast, pulling him back towards the world. This enemy manifests himself in a thousand forms -- not alike in the same persons. In Cain, it was a quick temper; in Jacob it was covetousness; in Saul it was obstinacy; in David it was lust; in Thomas it was unbelief; in Peter it was cowardice; in everyone of us it exists in some form, before the grace of God removes it. The author of Hebrews calls it "the sin that doth so easily beset you." It is the "besetting sin," or as the colored man called it, "the upsetting sin," for it is that disposition that upsets so many people who are trying to serve God. It is that which we call our weakness and which causes us to apologize so often, or if we do not our friends do for us. It is this that has given rise to the lines in the hymn:

"Prone to wander Lord, I feel it

Prone to leave the God I love."

Here is the crucial point of the young convert's experience. Here is to be determined whether he will be a strong or a weak Christian. Here is to be determined whether he will make healthy growth in grace or live an up and down life of little spiritual power.

This enemy is not only to be conquered but destroyed. This is a different contest from that with the other two. We can not destroy the world. It will still exist to allure and tempt. We can not destroy the devil. The scripture nowhere tells us to destroy these, but to resist the one and conquer the other. But it tells us to have the flesh destroyed. Notice, therefore, while it speaks of victory over the world it declares that our "old man is crucified," "mortified." We are not to get victory over him but "put him off and out," for so the Greek word means in Col. 2:11 and 3:9. Nothing is ever said in the word of God about making the old man a prisoner. It says, "That the body of sin might be destroyed." To have the "old man" suppressed and held down would not be a right state of heart. Nothing is right until it is all right. To have this sinful nature in us is a wrong state of heart.

But the objection is often raised that if the old man is destroyed it would be impossible for him to come to life again. In other words if the sinful nature was destroyed how could it return? Our reply is that a sinful nature may be implanted in a man who is holy, just as it was implanted in the holy Adam, for Adam was holy when created. When we can see how Adam, created in the image of God, could become unholy, we can see how a holy man of today can become unholy. Because a man has been cured of sickness it does not follow that he can not be sick again, if he violates the laws of health. And a holy man can be unholy if he so chooses, as did Adam.

The Bible most surely declares that we may be delivered from this inward enemy. It says, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." O young convert, seek by prayer and entire consecration this great deliverance! This experience is what is called Entire Sanctification. A term that frightens many people away from this experience, when at the same time they feel their need of it very much.

3. The Devil. He is a person, not an influence. Many passages that speak of him, also speak of God. To deny the existence of the one is to deny the existence of the other. Take a single passage, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." It will be seen at a glance that if one exists the other exists also. One is as real as the other. He is an enemy to be dreaded and resisted. We ought never to speak of him lightly or in jest, when we realize that he is our awful enemy, seeking our destruction.

He has ruined thousands, who once had a bright and happy experience. He knows our weak points. He can come like a roaring lion, or transform himself into an angel of light, or crawl as a cunning serpent. He is mighty but our God is Almighty and He gives us the power to resist him. We are told two things:

(1) "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." He never stops to parley with a determined soul.

(2) "We shall not be tempted above that which we are able." God will not allow him to overcome us if we rely on God. He can never overcome us by force. Only when we yield can he accomplish anything. Young convert, you are called to victory. God has made all the arrangements so that you never need to be defeated.

Having overcome the world in your conversion, and having got rid of the carnal mind by entire sanctification, you have only the devil now to fight.

Much prayer and strict obedience will make you a strong and growing Christian. Are you resolved to be such a Christian? Again we say, it depends upon you. God has made all the arrangements, now take the victory. Be a conqueror.

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THE END